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CHURCH OF THE  
VICTIMS  
OF THE  
SLAVE TRADE

*Volume 3*  
*Zenan-Namēh*  
*of Fazıl-Bey*  
*and*  
*Ta'dīb ul-Nisvān*



MAWAR SALLEH MING ELLI 1994

E A S T E R N   L O V E



THE BOOK OF WOMEN  
AND  
THE EDUCATION OF WIVES



ENGLISH VERSIONS OF THE  
ZENAN-NAMEH OF FAZIL-BEY  
AND TA'DĪB UL-NISVĀN BY  
E. POWYS MATHERS



\*  
VOLUME III

\*



JOHN RODKER  
FOR SUBSCRIBERS  
LONDON / 1927

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THIS EDITION OF THE ZENAN-NAMEH OF  
FAZIL-BEY, AND TA'DĪB UL-NISVĀN, BEING  
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*The Book of Women*  
*(Zenân - Nameh)*  
*of Fazîl - Bey*



*for*  
E. A. A.

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

FAZIL-BEY'S Book of Women *has been called* *Ars Amandi of the Turks*. *The work of its author marks the culmination of that revolt against authority, assertion of individuality, and delight in colour and license of manner and matter, which distinguished the Romantic Movement in Ottoman Letters from the Classicism which preceded, and the Modernism which followed it.*

*Yet Fazil-Bey was not, save by education, a Turk at all. He was born at Safed, and was the grandson of Tabir Omer, the descendant of an Arab of Medina who had settled in Syria. When his grandfather was killed, while attempting to hold Acre in revolt against the Ottoman Sultān in 1776, Fazil, who was a youth at the time, was taken to Constantinople by the victorious Turkish Admiral, Ghazi Hasan Pasha. There he was placed in the Imperial Seraglio, and educated as a Turkish gentleman. He lived the life of a Turkish poet, thought and loved and especially hated as a Turk, and died in 1812.*

*It will be seen that Fazil-Bey in his Book of Women deals out lyric praise and very pungent blame with an equally happy choice of language, and that he pretends to describe the women of forty different countries; he makes the same claim with regard to the boys of all nations in his Khoban-Nameh, Book of Beauties; but, in reality, the items*

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## Introductory Note

of his dictionnaires du tendre, with the exception of those near home, prove only that he was a good gossip and a profound believer in travellers' tales, and that he had a poet's eye for striking detail.

Perhaps the main importance of these two poems is that they provide the only concise document existing of the manner in which the old Turks, while as yet untouched by Western thought, considered the various nations with which they had come in contact. Also, if Zenan-Nameh gives no very distinct picture of all the women of the world, it at least provides one of the clearest to be found anywhere of the mentality of a Turkish artist in the Eighteenth Century.

In one respect Fazil-Bey adhered, though with only pleasing results, to an old convention. He introduced, seemingly at haphazard, series of proverbs, popular ripostes and catchwords, simply to show how well he could turn these into rhyme. Sometimes, indeed, he allows the final instance to have some bearing on the continuation of his theme; but the majority of these couplets have to be taken at face value.

I have gratefully translated from the racy French version of M. St. J. Bondin, 1895, which is said by scholars to be the first correct

European translation of  
the whole  
work.

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### *Preliminary Invocation*

LET US PRAISE GOD, FOR, IN THE CONFECTION of the world, He created also an artifice which is called woman. He sank a mutual fire into the breasts of Adam and Eve, so that our father gave himself to the elegancies of a pleasant body, catching it in his arms. If he could have resisted the first virgin he would have been perverse indeed.

It is a gracious game which has the birth of man for goal ; we are made that we may play it together. To see from the window of the gallant tabernacle the line of his posterity, that is the winner's prize. Those who owe their sons to this pastime are not a few ; there are still more who owe their lives to it. The inner body of a woman is the field of man.

He has made a discrepancy between the sexes and has created the portion of the young girl out of every grace ; He has decked her cheek with the hook of modesty and wrapped her body in lines of excellence, so that the young man shall come to her and youth continue. He has waked lust in the beasts after their kind, that the world should be the laboratory of birth and never idle. He has invented an affection for the young, so that the chain



## *Zenan-Nameh*

should continue in the three realms of nature, and throughout time. He has assigned no other bound to this filiation than that which he has set for every star.

### *Reasons for the Composition of this Poem*

AS A GALLANT WHO CARRIES THE CUP in a house of pleasure, so am I, Fazil, grave doctor in all learning, drunken with love, and thus unfold my theme. One day that lover who is my torment and the break in my heart, my soul and the abridgment of my world, my cypress that wavers in walking, ran to my wretched house as a falcon returns to her nest. I heard her quick feet upon the stair and my senses fainted; thrice my life was a gazelle startled into flight, and thrice it was pacified; a sweet trouble, as of wine, took hold upon me. At last my lover saluted me with a thousand gestures, giving her body all the curves of lam\*; then she closed the door and leaned against the wall and waited.

‘Command me,’ I cried, ‘O excitation filling my face with light! Could any but the Crown Maker and Crown Taker have made those eyes?’

‘My black eyes are extinguished, alas,’ she answered, ‘for they look upon the breast

## *Fazil-Bey*

of a youth and remember my separation. I burned for my Fazil as a tulip; he is my nightingale, my flower, and my saz\*. I came to make a prayer to him, but is this hour suitable? I fear to see my words fall ineffective, an arrow blunted from his breast. If the thorn of my prayer cannot pierce him, then shall the flirting rose of my lips be closed for ever.'

'O dream of the sea of hearts, I am ready,' I said. 'Pay me with the flame of your words and I press my breast to the thorn of the flirting rose. But that you command rather than beg, I beg and command; your orders are my joys, they are cups for all that I have of strength and care, and love is like he who pierced a mountain.'

Although my discourse was lacking in grace, her mouth began to smile. 'Since you are in this plastic mood,' she said, 'may the True God so do that you never find a rival at my knee, or taste of separation, or the tricks of foes, or my ill-humour. Since you have hearkened kindly to my prayer, O you whose mouth is decked with eloquence, and since *Khoban-Nameh*, that book of every sort of boy, traced to my order, has brought you praises, write now of women. That is the flower for which I sigh, the desire which shakes

## *Zenan-Nameh*

me, the savoury morsel I hunger for, hot from the fire. Let it be a book consecrated to girls, let it flow from your ink-well. Make a rejoicing portrait of each kind of us, virtuous or abominable, gracious or terrible. And add that which shall be sweet for lovers. Call it *Zenan-Nameh*, the Book of Women. It is a serious draught which a schoolboy could not drink, I know, but drain its much bitterness for my sake, Fazil, since, when the work is over, I shall be yours ; therefore accept the weariness of the moment, the importunity of the day for me.'

' O excitement, leave this fatal plan,' I cried, ' to Leila or Zuleikha. You who were called *Mahpareh*, fragment of the moon, how shall I name you now ? In this valley and garden of the world was never such a planting, so do not ask it of me. To make our divans for utter shamelessness would stain our reputation. If some feminine eyelet stay agape or has found a thing to close it, does that concern my verses ? It is a road of mud I would not willingly stir up, and a low door you should not urge me to stoop through.'

' Do not wither the king flower of my garden,' the delight made answer. ' Break not a delicate girl with words, O unblown rose of mine ! Have you bound yourself with black hair, have you grown weary ? ' And then she pro-

tested her love for me, saying: 'By the joy of eyes, the wine of looks, and the night of my salvation, by the holy hour and fibre of my heart, by this sweat and by these mirrors, I would to God that I had never felt such pain! For very pity do not delay this poem, this meat of my desire! If you wish to part, needs it a week to say so? Oh, be propitious, moon who drags my sea!'

But I answered: 'Do not ask me to show you the wickedness of the world, heart's resting-place, for I will not dive into that sea. Surely the tricks of the midwife and of the bawd are sacrosanct? The pear is unripe which I refuse you, so do not overwhelm my wiser head.'

'I would have you ask yourself of every kind, and speak of all,' she murmured with an angry eye, and the purple rage of the rose was born in her cheek. 'I will banish you for ever, though not without tears,' she cried. 'I swear by the sword of God and by my glances that I will never give you joy, but rather forget the aspects of your face and see no difference in it, and be without hearing until the end. You shall recall the honour done to your house this day and the scent of the roses you have cast aside.'

Then I resolved to follow the good road, and showed myself submissive. The night is big

## *Zenan-Nameh*

with the morrow, and in this hope the lover should obey.

Begin your babble, pen, go out once more upon the track of rhyme, the cat's-eye stone of rhyme. Already I have written in praise of youth ; I have scattered the dew of my verses for them. But now I will borrow from all wells and tear the hidden thought from the husband's breast ; my ideas on the subject of women have never been published.

Here, in the shape to which it seduced my dark pen, now lies my poem in its integrity. No older master has dreamed of such a subject.

My two books are as it were the halves of one whole. This may be considered as the pendant, as the legitimate brother of *Khoban-Nameh*, or as a son born of the same substance.

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## *Preface*

**O** EYE OF MINE, O WANDERING FRIEND OF beauty about the world, be not astonished or troubled at the tricks she played me ; for such are the natural means of woman's wit. How shall I enter upon the dark path of explanation, how shall I begin now ?

Let her be as a tender plant that is not yet grafted, a little tree still clinging to maternal seeds ; let her be graceful with a modest boldness, and clean in her person ; let her be not at all like the Turks of Anatolia ; let her breast be simply covered ; let not the fat of laziness be upon her ; let a sensual balance distinguish her walking, and a light refreshing voice her conversation ; out of each two words she utters let not one be criticism ; let her age scarcely exceed fifteen, for I would not have her manners out-of-date.

Every woman is false and wicked ; her graces cannot save her from that ; but at least she may be a virgin. Otherwise I disdain her, and by virginity I mean virginity. If there has been the least relaxation, it does not matter to me whether a whole caravan has passed that way or whether she is scarcely ravished. It is above all things necessary that she has

## *Z e n a n - N a m e h*

never born, that no bastard sucker grows in the garden near her. I cannot understand how a whole army can gather kisses from a single breast. Yet if a woman has made us a father once or twice, let us keep her ; if her secret places have not become insipid, that is, and if she be still agreeable.

Detailed explanation is the gateway of desire, or so the illustrious ancients say. Therefore I only advance three further things in general. She should seem beautiful to her husband and wear her modesty with a sure hand. She should be ever upon the defensive. She should not have jealous eyes which can grow red, like crusets upon the fire ; that passion is an instrument of death.

If God has given you an inclination towards these creatures, then thank Him in return for the decoration He has spent upon them. Also take your walk towards the Kiāghid-Khaneh\* in the season of roses.

Wear a Lahore shawl, like a terrace of geraniums, round your head, and cover your thighs with full and highly-spangled drawers. Have on a coral-coloured jacket embroidered in black, and thrust an expensive yatagan into your belt. Carry a chain of pearls upon your breast. Such things are nets. Finally, let your purse half gape, and to give your eyes the glitter

## *Fazil-Bey*

of rubies, take one or two cups of rosy liquor.

If you see many women assembled in one place, then turn your steps in that direction. But do not walk like an old man weighed down by infirmity, for whom each step is labour; go forward with a gracious swing. Hold a pipe in your hand and send forth every puff with the strength of a dragon, and a bubbling roar like the voice of lions. Let a strand of hair point down below your fez.

They will look upon you as a second Ruſtem, and throw down their hearts as if the planet Mars were out at exercise. These are the wages for which they give their souls. I have told you to show a little of your perfumed hair, just at this point and that, beneath the artistic disarrangement of your fez; be careful, also, to let them guess at a certain thing. Wear benevolence upon your lips, and do not shoot menacing looks to right and left as you proceed.

Then you will gather their signs and salutations all along your way: for one will smile back as she bends over her slipper, and another be troubled and watch the ground. And you will have rose looks from the corner of the eye, or a few words, or the falling of a *ferājeħ\** to excite you, for they have many ways: an



## *Z e n a n - N a m e h*

exhibition of wavering barbed sighs, true hooks, or a half-opened qaftān\* showing a breast, or divination of a shalwār's\* secret, or *Do not look at me now, but wait, dear love.*

Soon a slave will come to you, bearing a rose and saying : ' My lady is mad for you, therefore refuse this flower, therefore be angry with her. Heed my advice, dear friend, and send an answer more apt to scatter her hair in rage than turn her lips to flowers.'

This is the exact moment to have a caique with three pairs of oars in waiting, and to let them watch you move off on the sea. A murmur will rise among them, your name hasten like mercury from mouth to mouth. ' Whence comes this amiable young man, this gracious flower ? Out of what garden and from what dog-rose tree ? Where is his house, and what breast nourished him ? ' You will have thrown a brand among them and nurtured the roses of vexation.

Never sigh after the fascinating eyes of these deceitful creatures ; I have thrown light women from my ways entirely. While they are casting the slipper for you, be as the moon who goes to bed alone each night. Were you hidden in the belly of a bull and they had axes, they would find you out. By this time they are ablaze for you ; one prays for you, one fills her house with sighs.

As a result of your reserved indifference, you will be sent notes ; give yourself up, when the time comes, as if unwillingly. The most important thing with women is never to seem in a hurry. You will be received with transports of desire ; you must show no answering flame. If you follow my counsel, you may aspire to all the women of the world, and love the pleasant liberties of each in turn ; yet do not altogether forget your young friends, for there also is drunkenness.

But in the trouble of my heart my words have wandered ; I must return, as she commanded, and speak to you of women.

### *Hind*

**M**Y YOUNG AND UNAFFECTED SUN AND moon, come let us lift the veil of secret conversation. Here are the women of India.

A portrait of deep tan and black eyes, but very cold. Yet they seem full of fire, and a lover is like to lament a cold reception and a fiery gleet. . . .

Come, Fazil, Spring marches upon her way, and Winter is over : be done with the frost of these imaginations ; it is time to show the girls, to prick your mount with indefatigable steel.

## *Zenan-Nameb*

### *Persia*

AS I am an expert in sex I will now paint the women of Persia for you. Their bodies are a prayer to folly. They have intoxicating eyes shaped like long almonds, and brows joined in the two curves of a bow. They are a promise and a drunkenness; they implore with their walking. Each poet and orator, if he be a master, each prose writer and draftsman of the world has granted Persia this supremacy. Such was the tradition of old, and it was honoured; but now, alas, your women have fallen from favour, O land of singing, and you sit and think of none but your young friends. Therefore these women of authentic paradisaical beauty weep because of the young friends, and sigh in their broken hearts that they cannot draw their masters to tender caressing. They live together as if they were strangers, or in two far countries; the people of Persia had already vanished, were it not for the poor. I take you to task in this way, men of the Usbeks, because you are not rotten yet all through. None, in your present course, can hope for personal beauty, or expect other than the furrows of a vixen old in vice. But they who frequent young girls live to two hundred.

## *Fazil-Bey*

### *Bagdad*

YOU command desire and it obeys, moon-tinted sun and flower of nature, O brown girl of Bagdad. Your health is bronzed, and you have no roses, but the shape of your body is sufficient wine.

She is difficult. 'What need have I?' she says, and none may enter her garden. There is no hold for a finger-nail outside her wall. Her conversation is dull, even in gallantry; but that will not matter.

When Hulagu-Khan\* reached to Bagdad, he ruined her utterly and put her people to the sword; then came the Arabs out of the desert, and pillaged all. Where are they now? Let this example be a lesson for the Arabs of today; let them realise that their dwelling is the cave of the past, that pleasures with women or young friends are not for them.

Seek elsewhere a silver body, a countenance of roses; but the first approach with these tanned women is most enchanting. Bright-coloured girls are born for adultery in any case, God help you! *Bagdad does not seem far to him who loves*, the proverb says.

## *Z e n a n - N a m e b*

### *Egypt*

HEAR me, O land of Yusuf and Zuleikha, for I am about to speak of the women of Cairo, whom the Devil gave.

They are devoured by their fires and stand along the road, upon the right hand and upon the left. One argument has force with them, the offer of a farthing, the maximum and the minimum that custom fixes. Their bodies are of a fine brown colour. The Frank is blessed in that land. If a girl only squints and nothing more, they extol her perfect eyes ; examine her closely, though, for she may be rather blind as well.

Their ardour for the fire of enjoyment is so great that men with pumps might fail to allay it, even with the whole Nile. They will come to it in spite of lunar inconvenience or a eunuch's weakness.

A great lady will ride through the bazars upon an ass (you have this audacity, sweet ladies, yes, you have this shamelessness, my dears !) then go between embroidered sheets for him. And no one is ignorant of this.

*Although the hind prevaricates awhile  
His thirst will bring him to the crocodile.*

*Each suppliant knee in turn let merchants bend  
They have to leave the market in the end.*

## *Fazil-Bey*

*With men on either side his steps to rule  
The mule's one master will remain the mule.*

*The poor man who desires a quince  
Will not address the fig as prince.*

*That pilgrim is a fool who will not rest ;  
To come to holiness a mule is best.*

*Who carries on two separate love affairs  
Divides his joys and multiplies his cares.*

*An Arab who speaks civilly, you'll find,  
Has some profoundly dirty trick in mind.*

*My greeting is the same to high and low ;  
I am not welcomed anywhere I go.*

*In public he is Fulminating Fervent,  
In private he's Your Lordship's humble servant.*

*Speak of her hidden charms as flowers ; but, oh,  
Be very careful not to treat them so.*

*How swift will truth to lips Egyptian spring  
When truth is the most profitable thing.*

*He asks for a scraped bustard bone to suck,  
He means an exquisitely roasted duck.*

NAWA.

*Z e n a n - N a m e b*

*Only a lover could be true  
To such a faithless wife as you.*

*How oft the commentary's self repeats  
The rule with which the commentary deals.*

*A parting guest is of so little worth  
He may be asked to bear the luggage forth.*

*That damsel with the modest mien and dress  
Is a good woman? Ay, of business.*

*Sorcery's but a trick, and yet he errs  
Who says : I fear it not, to sorcerers.*

*He lifts his coffee to your health, and drinks . . .  
Even the Devil knows not what he thinks.*

*Go hunting where you please, and you will end  
With ten good qualities for one good friend.*

*Your lover will begin an amorous sonnet  
At sight of gallows and the fruit upon it.*

How can words come from such unpleasant confrontation? Does the strangeness of the occurrence make the poet? Is the gift but an insolence upon his tongue? Is he a clock indifferently striking?

If it be but a carnal desire which livens him,

how can the soul pass to the voice, and a song be born upon the saz in notes of moving music ? I tell you this, it comes to me without my seeking, and the fire is lighted.

Why do they call Egypt the mother of the world ? She is a harlot who has given herself from age to age, and to all peoples.

### *Sudan*

O MY dawn-coloured Greek, the daughter of the Sudan is a tendril in night's hair. To keep silent about that land would but add to its wrongs ; yet how will ink show out upon the night ?

I can say nothing against this accusation of sombre colour ; yet cast a glance upon the portrait which my pen is tracing, for it tells the truth.

Their ancestors were the ignorant children of Ham, who was himself turned black for ignorance. So say the wise, and are content to think it so ; but I contend we owe our colour to climate, just as silver does. Why should a people be banished from the human house just for a tint ; cannot a black breast have a precious form ?

A night-coloured body may seem of ebony, but why should I, who have a face before me lighted by the harmonies of a purple rose,



## *Zenan-Nameh*

bow down to ebony? The day, setting fire to my sighs, rather than the night for Fazil, musk rather than ink.

I do not like her hair and will not describe it, leaving, rather, that darkness in the dark.

She is hardly an object worthy of my dreams. Her feet are for the kitchen, her highest aspiration can but be to serve our women; she even spitefully confesses this.

What fool would spend a night caressing night and, on the morrow, give her the rank of lady, pretending her face to be the light? War would be abroad, she would cease to respect her master, and quarrel with the mistress of the house.

*Two lions cannot share a cave*, the proverb says.

## *Abyssinia*

DAUGHTER of the language of Paradise, moon of the soul, queen Abyssinian of the land of ardour, I pray you remain the lighthouse of expectation, and keep this star of coquetry.

If women were divided into armies under banners, then beneath the chosen flag of Abyssinia would be all slight waists, and maiden roses, opening for an hour, only to close again; eternal virginity, nightly reappearing.

It is said that their cheeks, coloured in carmine harmonised with brown, are things to lose the

## *Fazil-Bey*

soul for. If he see but two or three of the children of this land, he will shed all scruple, in spite of magic precautions, and forget his wisdom. He will burn like a barn eaten with fire, or a furnace fed by night and day ; compassionate him only, say the doctors. He is tossed from the passion of hope to the passion of certainty that she will share his flame.

## *Yemen*

ALAS, O henna-tinted nail of the universe, O land of Yemen, O bright bride, the cruel climate has denied your women all favour. Illness breaks their body, so farewell loveliness, good-bye to coquetry ! They are as thin as crows, and yet seem dropsical ; their faces are a prey to terror.

They walk heavily and move mournfully. Custom will not let them leave their homes by day ; it is at night their husbands take them to the bath ; this is but a ruse to hide their absence of attraction.

Such are her faults and such her portraiture. It is enough for a very ordinary young man to shoot one significant glance towards her and her head will be lost for ever. She flames for the first comer, and clings to him. The men are chaste because the women are hideous, the women are pure because the men are vile.

## *Zenan-Nameh*

Journey yourself into this land taking a beautiful girl with you, and they will cast themselves at her feet in a wild surprise, offering life for her; one saying she is Jesus incognito and another, Gabriel.

## *Morocco*

YOU walk in Constantinople with the slim figures of trees, but hideous of face and language, of walking and of soul, Moroccan girls, black ringlets of Fez, as ignorant in pleasure as the little boys and girls you left in Tlemcen. A stranger, an infidel going to that land, may see the faces of the women; their eyes will cling to him. It is their custom.

Here is another custom: the people wear no ornament, but wash on Fridays and go forth with kingly fez and sumptuous irhām,\* a very white burnous, a kingly fez.

## *Algeria*

YOURS is a fine land, O women of the lion, of the warrior Dey. You are as it were a palace rising above humanity, and he is your gold dome. May I speak of the subtlety of your face and manner? Gird on your apron above your qaftān, writer, and make fast your robe!

Though a lover unsealing the attraction of his mistress should be cast away, may the violence

## *Fazil-Bey*

of his love excuse him ; the army of gallants are his surety ; the means of each the capital of all.

## *Tunis*

WHY is there a dark and bloody slave on guard at the palace ? A generous lord has just set foot in the city, and all the women have begun to make joyous trouble.

There are innumerable women of good will in Tunis, that second Cairo.

## *Interlude on Marriage*

IF TRANQUILLITY BE A PLEASURE TO YOU, do not go out as a candidate for marriage, even with a virgin daughter of the Cæsars of Rome, or the Khusraus of Persia. Marriage is the whole unhappiness of life, guard yourself from it ; it is the heavy yoke, keep your head free. To lose independence in order to gain children is a sign of madness.

To be reduced to a single woman, to renounce variety ! This Nabi, our venerable predecessor, speaks of as abominable ; thus has he written.

And to this I would add : copy the moon in her continual revolutions and change your lodging every night ; arrange a nest in each

## *Zenan-Nameh*

garden, a house in every quarter; drink at all fountains, and do not cramp your soul to the stint of one.

To frequent one woman only is imbecility. She may have bad habits, or a valueless character; she may nurture a horrible jealousy and overwhelm the unlucky man with a thousand difficulties if he at times be absent or pass a night away from home.

Countless humiliations follow a man into this voluntary prison. A respectable stranger presents himself, and she cries out at him: 'To the door with the sodomite!' and then at the top of her voice: 'To the fire with the sodomite!' which brings the whole quarter about the gate. The noise of the riot rises to heaven and the husband is dishonoured before his guest. Such scenes are pitiable; I will not burden my work with more of them.

But if the rogue become pregnant, you must catch the wildest bird for her caprice; she will ask for something fabulous, as the brain of the anqa\*, and there will be lamentations and affecting poses. 'I am dead!' she shouts in a voice of thunder. 'If ever I sport with this goat of a man again, may my sins not be forgiven me! Take away this ram; he asks the favour every night.'

The husband, stunned by such clamour, can

## *Fazil-Bey*

do no less than run in search of swarthy nurses ; the noise of servants and of women friends is added. The cries and quarrels and complaints are like the last day of judgment ; his house is vexed as in a time of earthquake.

At last a bastard is brought forth, and a new calamity ; and if it be a boy this passes all bounds. Tell the good news to the whole world, distribute purses of silver with both hands and, if you would not have your head torn into pieces by the tongs of the women of the quarter, be swift to buy a cradle.

Listen to the music of the house : *Ninny my little one, ninny my pasha, ninny my two eyes ; my baby, my darling, my treasure, and my sweet lamb !* There are visitors at the door : *taq, taq ! taq, taq !* and the infant cries : *waq ! waq !*

Who would not be assailed by melancholy and become disgusted with his life ; who would not desert all and flee as far as India ?

When you come in, you find a thousand schemers. *So-and-so has just gone*, your sherbert has gone also ; *this child has come*, but your sweetmeats have not come back. As consolation you have the latest news of the Imām or the Sheikh Efendi.

You fled to this folly of marriage for comfort ; it is a thousand troubles, and no complaint allowed.

## *Zenan-Nameh*

The artist in pleasure walks wide of this trap, and avoids this precipice's neighbourhood. If he has an idol in share, he does not spend a thousand and one nights on her.

Wisdom elects the single state ; Jesus was firm in this ; it is liberty and power. Yet experience creates custom, and night a desire for the day ; our fathers also ate sweetmeat, houses are necessary things.

## *Mecca*

YOU are the carpet of the black stone, it is the Kaaba which gives you beauty and not your women, for these are dark, ill-built, foul-mouthed, and very skinny.

If the women of Mecca have charm, then the other women of the world have not. Yet their bodies, lacking the lustre of new silver, have yet its purity, and I am not surprised.

Just as Egypt is a land of whores, and utterly corrupt, so are all the deserts of Arabia virtuous, and again I am not surprised.

The women from Mecca to Bagdad either burn or cut blue lines upon their bodies and stain their lips with blue, thinking such things a decoration. You will find them mottled all over like a snake, or scrawled with sorcerous hieroglyphics. A girl receives her lover as if in a tiger skin, with pictures leading to her

private charms. The most usual of these is a hare and greyhound near the navel, as if the dog had run round from behind her back and started the hare out of some secret form. The Arabs like these colours and designs, and think a ring in the nose a great distinction.

If a quarrel arises among these people, each faction chooses a virgin and decks her with glittering things ; they set her on a camel beneath a canopy, and she precedes them. Then to defend her is honour and victory, and all are ready to sacrifice their lives. As long as a single man of her faction stays on his feet and touches her camel, she may not be taken captive ; a score of stratagems are used to drive him from her side. So in the struggle for this one girl a thousand Arabs lose their lives ; I do not ask God's pity for such a people.

*Virtue is hard, but vice is sometimes harder ;  
A cat's made good by locking up the larder.*

*Though you die childless, O unhappy one,  
Who leaves a daughter may beget a son.*

*of sheep, of grazing and of water ;  
I hate these things, but love the shepherd's daughter.*



## *Z e n a n - N a m e b*

*I'll tell you, when you've fixed her marriage portion,  
If she's a houri or a plain abortion.*

*Wait till the caravan eventuates  
Before you worry if its load be dates.*

*Now that I've two black slaves I'd be content  
With fifty sequins and a larger tent.*

*He's twenty thousand sheep, and now he sighs :  
'Two thousand camels with black-bordered eyes.'*

*With twenty kinsfolk at these gatherings  
There will be twenty winter cloaks to give  
Or rather more, for with a relative  
One always has to keep repeating things.*

*If grief can darken, then I know a face  
That could create a second Kaffir race.*

*Your love's untidy and her face is queer . . .  
I'm sorry that you think so, Mother dear.*

'Our daughter is of noble birth,' they say, and give you a catalogue to prove that she is sprung from such an one, the son of such an one, as if a few fathoms of lineage made up for what she lamentably lacks. And if by yielding to every demand you get the girl, she comes to you naked, with a black shift for all her dowry; yet her relations ask the gold of

Arabia for her. What other people pays such curious honour to its daughters ?

She has neither wealth nor beauty ; she is the offspring of such an one, the son of such an one, the son of such an one ; but will that comfort my purse or my desire ?

It is the custom to lead the betrothed to her husband with ceremony, but of a peculiarly disagreeable kind. She is set on a camel and her relations ride after her, while her betrothed and his friends come forth to meet her. As soon as the bands approach each other, a long battle begins between them, and many single combats are fought out. When the fight is at its hottest she is led away ; such is the giving of the bride. Gallants are wounded and horses torn ; but all is well unless the girl chance to become a widow in this melancholy business. I cannot understand it.

At sunset on the night appointed for the consummation, such as are left of the relatives assemble and form a ring in front of the house ; then they take swords, and begin to dance and fence most gracefully. Each face is covered with a light veil ; they have long hair and a short wit, these people.

They continue such antics until the swords fall from their hands. It is an old custom among them that any who bleeds at the nose

## *Zenan-Nameh*

from exhaustion, or throws down a friend through clumsiness, may be struck once by all. Thus rejoicing is changed to mourning for that man, and joy to grief.  
O my Lord God, what madness !

## *Damascus*

BRIDE of the world, whose splendour eclipses the night star, how are you crammed with foulness !

Virtue would be a shocking thing in Damascus, and a chaste woman bring down the walls like a miracle.

This city gives honour to an abominable custom, making the tombs serve as a bed for prostitution. They hang their sheets under each cupola, the floors of the dead are polluted by their lustful feet. Men carry their lewdness to the tombs without fear, and cheerfully replace each dead by a new life, over the dust of holy persons. Whether the door of a mausoleum be great or small, it is ever open ; lust leads the Damascene lady of rank to the place of the departed. They take their pleasure above corpses, and Satan, the filthy-minded, leads them on. The husbands are so blind there, you would think they were anxious to nurture the offspring of the dead.

The boys and girls are equally ugly in Damascus.

## *Fazil-Bey*

### *Syria*

HER body is yellow amber devoured by fire, for sense is the sole preoccupation of the Syrian ; the roses fade in her before they have come to birth. Her dress is like the winding-sheet of the dead, and the silver about her ankles is as the rings of harness. She wears the veil cleft, even in chastity, especially at the time of the holy caravan, as a mark to the shafts of the curious, as a right of inspection.

In the season of apricots she goes out to sell to the pilgrims, setting them on her head and steadying them with her arm : the pilgrims examine her through the slit in her nut-coloured veil.

Look not desirously upon a Syrian coming towards you thus ; for she can teach more lessons in love than one.

When her husband calls for his wife, his word is : *Shamli\** !

### *The Bedouins*

DAUGHTER of the land of Hauran, if you are graceless, so then is the hind of the Sahara without grace. You take water to your lover among the spears, O bride of courage, O wild fruit tasting of the desert. You cut and bind the naval cord and roll the tent and take your home

## *Zenan-Nameh*

upon your back, all in one day. Your courage cannot weaken, no, not if you meet a demon in the sand.

It is by these properties of the earth of her land that she attracts. It is true that it is also my land ; but why should my mouth therefore withhold its praises ? Have I not chosen the better way ? Any other point of view had been a fault in me. I am like a parrot that eats sugar, closing my ears.

Yet there is a strange custom in this country ; for, however poor a man may be, he takes four wives, and the five all live together in a single room, if that is all he has. Therefore, while he enjoys one, the others look on and are eaten up with vexation ; and not to take each in turn is to provoke a riot.

And they have another unpleasant observance ; for, if a man dies and his wives walk after him wailing, that is the time for the relatives to appraise the wives. They dress in black and begin a dance with sabres, indicting the justice of God in a loud voice. They bring the dead man's arms to the parade ground, and one of the shameless wives, advancing with a scimitar, butchers his horse. I cannot understand such funeral rites ; they add new losses to the first misfortune.

The nature of this people inclines to pleasure,

### *Fazil-Bey*

and each man has a house among the gardens. The faces of the wives are covered, as we keep metal rarities, in a black cloth. They go to their house in the gardens at the time of mulberries and nourish silkworms there, until the last egg is gathered. The silkworm esteems the mulberry leaves, and the women the silk.

### *The Druses*

THE mountains are an exquisite country and the Druses, who dwell among them, having abominable instincts, lay them waste. They are as low and beastly as their heights are tall and fair. Their women are slight, and yellow roses blossom in their face. They wear a long silver cone on their head, and uncover one eye ; to allow a man to see the veiled eye is an advance.

These may be trifles, but trifles which have become customs last till Judgment ; they are implacable, they may bring down the curses of the world upon a nation.

### *Aleppo*

LISTEN, my witty student, my would-be scintillator among girls, the women of Aleppo are in perfect harmony, being ash-coloured like their city, and quite as agreeable as her climate, but

## *Zenan-Nameh*

never more so. Light is the beauty of the world, and these women wear a piece of silver on their brows ; thus can they be compared with moonbeams, but only thus.

There are many gallant ladies in Aleppo, and near the Emessian Khan especially. Kindness is sold by the yard in Aleppo ; its whores have gone out into all countries.

They work in many-coloured stuff, tracing it over with symbols ; each cuts out her own chemise for herself ; never a good cut.

## *Anatolia*

GAY student of women, gallant amid the battlefield, hear wisdom on the grace of Anatolian ladies :

*To insolence there comes the selfsame ill  
As to a tree alone upon a hill.*

*Though anserine she can seduce  
Any man . . . who is a goose ;  
Nay, where were Nature's usufruct if  
The pig to pig were not seductive ?*

Could there be a fouler practice than the leading of the bride to the bridegroom in Anatolia ? Her dearest friends dapple many chapters of the Koran all over her body, until she has the

## *Fazil-Bey*

appearance of a presentation sheep. Her escort holds a crow (that sickening bird !) and the crow is present at the defloration, as if he should attest to it. Afterwards the bridegroom ties the legs of the crow, and carries it out ; then if it says : *qaq ! qaq !* (fool, fool !) the people cry : *God manifest the truth ! God guard the bird ! God prosper the poor animal !*

It is not for me to find a reason for such imbecile observance. It is obvious, you will say, to the intelligent.

## *The Islands of the Archipelago*

O GOVERNOR of the Archipelago, you have an unpleasant face, but I address you : the daughters of these islands are worthy of Paradise ! When His Excellency crosses the Archipelago, he is never weary of admiring the daughters of these lands.

The girls of Cyprus are an exception, but the pretty boys cannot be numbered there. In Cyprus they hold a piece of lentisk gum in the mouth, keeping it there all day : it is apparently a source of pleasure to them.

As for the other islands, each has a special and enticing dress, a ravishing distinction ; each is a separate heaven of houris, with boys like angels.



## *Zenan-Nameh*

A further telling would lead me too far, and in more than one direction. My poem must not be overweighted. A hint suffices for the intelligent student: no drop of water runs away to sea.

## *Constantinople*

GLORY and hail, O cradle of manners, O Constantinople scarfed with graces, O male youth of the land, O female youth! Your women stand on the dais of beauty, as a type for the whole earth. The ancients spoke of Egypt as the world's mother; you are its bride. The Creator has overwhelmed this city with advantages for eye and heart; water and earth conspire in her adornment; the means to every pleasure, even the slightest, woo the approach there; her climate is a rosebud in the cheek of folly, a flower brought up in cotton floss, even roses and soft cotton from one stem. The inexperienced man who seeks to mould himself by imitation, even of less worthy things, is welcome there; for such are capitals! Thus wisdom and gaiety are ever adding some new refinement of pleasure to my Constantinople, and masters in every art flock to her daily, to change some one of her customs, to smooth some one of her landmarks, to obliterate in

### *Fazil-Bey*

some small way the road our fathers trod, until it seem a rough and useless bypath. The unexampled disorder of society is caused by this.

The planet Venus hangs ever above Constantinople ; yet it is as well to divide her beauties into two bands, each of them fatal for me ; since emeralds show the same as diamonds in the dark.

First comes the modest woman, the mother, who does not appear in public ; she is a ruby in silver, a rose in a sphere of glass, a second Hebrew Mary, worthy of reverence, and a caged parakeet. She does not loosen her hair to the West wind, or her reputation to the sun's hour.

And you may find the semblance of such virtue in the other band, but it is a mad modesty cloaking a passion. The way of the second is daintiness and jewels ; she is a new Balkis ; he of the double mantle\* said of them that their soul is plunder.

Learn to know this ostentatious and luxurious elf, these ears with hanging diamonds ; for her purpose in life is to get more of those and to be more beautiful.

The affectation of her walk is such that you would think her ill, or that her legs were bound together ; she goes from shop to shop in the bazar, followed by slaves, until she fixes upon the richest, and minces before it.

## *Z e n a n - N a m e h*

‘ Is there nothing here which might suit me ? ’  
she asks. ‘ Have you no merchandise to show  
me, dear chelebi\* ? Have you no business to  
do with me ? ’

Such are the double meanings of this moon, and  
she underlines their second sense with gestures.

Then the lips of the timid chelebi open like a  
rose ; he looks upon her henna-twinkling  
fingers, Satan’s claws, and down into her  
breasts ; and the lock of his shop is broken  
for ever more. She comes to him among his  
goods at midnight, and her husband gets his  
reward, the wages of working late and eating  
and sleeping and rising for his labours in the  
dawn.

*Two aspers is the Cairene price . . . and was.  
It should be one, cries want . . . and ever has.*

*Justice is mockery, the people say,  
And yet the courts are crowded every day.*

*Our daily lyings are a hundred odd,  
And none’s complete without the name of God.*

*Debtor goes bankrupt ; lion eats up fox ;  
Then lion dies of an internal pox.*

*Though falling in a trap fulfil my fate,  
I need not walk where trappers congregate.*

*Fazil-Bey*

*He scorches Kārūn\* with a splendid fire  
Or trips old women on a patch of mire.*

*When any woman once has found the way  
She would be walking in it night and day.*

And such is the woman in the shop, although no novice ; she is as ceaseless in her movement as an elephant's trunk, and but one thing of his concerns her. ' Let my prayer-rug fall to Hell,' she cries, as she gives herself ; and she tortures her chelebi to be up and doing, a score of times, until her fire is gorged. ' My aga, my sultān, I cannot leave you,' she says. ' My conversation lengthens like a thread in my lord's presence, and my heart is troubled.'

*At his poor home there's neither grain nor drop ;  
The grocer's pride begins and ends in shop.*

*No meat, cries Surfeit, for henceforth I swear  
A lily salad shall be all my fare.*

*O wondrous cobbler, from a little skin  
He made my girl a . . . boat to travel in.*

*How strong this carriage and how fine the building,  
For look, my dear, it is all over gilding.*

*Better a mountain\* on the breast, than lands  
Upon the weary head and heart and hands.*

*Z e n a n-N a m e h*

*I want the moon\*, I do not wish to force you,  
But, if I do not get it, I'll divorce you.*

*If there's a thing to shut, then shut it,  
Though half the desert would not glut it.*

*Passion can neither turn aside nor stop ;  
The purchaser must move from shop to shop.*

*Beware those eyes that blink and slink and stray,  
And those that are as honest as the day.*

*Can an old woman's heart, however hot,  
Stand her instead of beauty? It can not.*

*'Tis open to the plain as to the fair  
To love geraniums, but she should beware  
Of setting a geranium in her hair.*

*Though there are proven remedies for wine  
They are not suited to a case like mine.*

*To treat a harlot with consideration  
Is worse than murder for the reputation.*

*There never was a quarrel yet in which  
There was not both a "coward" and a "bitch."*

*An amorous crone coquetting with the young  
Is like a cat that shakes a piece of dung.*

*Fazil-Bey*

*I don't put on your slipper, why should you  
Plant carrots in my field? And yet you do.*

*Wish vines to cover all your fields with wealth ;  
But don't forget to wish your friends good health.*

*One says : ' I see a far off troop of men ;'  
The women cry : ' It is our lovers then.'*

Women were not always so, but today a species of bad pride possesses them ; they burn for each other in words, but in deed it is not so. One gallant meeting is like another, for the same actor plays the principal role, though speechless. If a lover would solve this riddle, let him examine his armoury ; and if he guesses right, I pray in return that he may find her pure. If you are inclined to these diversions, you should study women as a bad book, for then you will learn this silver rule, that the lover who can withstand his senses for a little while shall prevail over the mistress.

You will say something of this sort : ' O light, O pain, O cypress tree and birth of happiness, nightingale of my rose, direction of my sighs, O silver arms, to what far morrow do you banish me ? Is a drake\* seated on the wall, is our flax at market, that you send me afresh to die of impatience in the desert ? '

## *Zenan-Nameh*

Then she will say: 'If you are Sweet Aloe Wood, my name is Lady Fire; if you are essence of roses, I am the crystal; if you are the mountain top, I am the morning.'

And after this you will go to it; it is as it were a poison.

There are some women who will never give the heart except in gratitude; you will not meet these unless you are rich: but there are still some women in the world who are moved by the beauty of man.

Above all, keep cool and learn to differentiate between resemblances. Even sages have been known to make mistakes. Do not confound the monthly fashion with pregnancy; do not touch either, leave them both to God.

## *Greece*

IF you like the sex, choose a young Greek, for she is the credit of the church without bells\*; the ear of her soul is ever on the alert; her voice is perfumed with the red flower of her lips; she walks like a sapling grown in Paradise; her glance has strange delight, her mouth is a school, bird notes are obligations to her, words take on a new wine when she has said them.

*Please God I may become the lover of such a girl and cover her with kisses, you sigh on seeing her, and half your soul leaps out, forgetting her religion.*

## *Fazil-Bey*

A lover must woo her with all difficult restraints, as if he wrote poetry ; he must glory to strive to be like her, even in attitude and faltering walk. They journey together, singing their flame ; but, just as she is won, he grows too much confused. I can understand this well. What do such wooings matter to my heart ? It is as if one set fire to a forest path going towards a light ; for if the Grecian woman is beautiful, the youthful Greek by far surpasses her ; and, oh, he burns when he is overcome, his mouth is the breast of a rose fulfilled with dew. *It is a sunbeam*, cries out one ; but another cries : *It is the torch of hope*.

*In every vice this phosphorescent grace is :  
Who paints with filth can shine in evil places.*

*You write your name, and as you do  
You draw a faithful portrait too.*

*If your soul wanders\* where my treasure is  
I pray you tell me what its measure is.*

*Whose net can stretch from land to land,  
Whose carpet cover all the sand ?*

*He who can bend as low as that, may bend  
To licking dirty shoes before the end.*



### *Z e n a n - N a m e b*

*Take these red eggs, my dearest, said  
The man whose hands were wet with red.*

*Jews lend at ten per cent, cries little Nix,  
You can't accuse me of such filthy tricks.*

*How can I answer for her purity,  
When Mary's cloud\* is far too high for me?*

Greece is not like the Greeks, but her daughters are women.

*Interlude on Wantons, on Justice, and the  
Neighbours*

**B**E CAREFUL, DEAR LOVER OF WOMEN, TO dress yourself warmly before you enter upon their path; for it must be pursued both day and night, if you would be successful, and without truce or shelter.

Even the wisest, when he moves in darkness, cannot easily tell whether the woman with whom he has to do is in the trade or no. He should not be guided by public rumour in this matter, or by what gallants say; for many hunters in their novitiate have fallen by night into disastrous traps.

They put tricks of coquetry in action, and lead men to houses marked by an outside lamp. In bed they use exciting ways and questions; they take the hand and guide it to their

## *Fazil-Bey*

attractions, their lips form words as sweet as the honey of the nightingale. They steal a titillating kiss, and push the bolt. The novice is about to sheath his dagger, when a great noise bursts forth ; a man, versed in such business, knocks on the panels ; black beards, white beards and gypsies, all the folk of the quarter, thunder at the door ; then push together and force it.

They all conduct the beauty to the tribunal of an Imām, an old man dazed with sleep, his breeches hardly fastened, with a stick, snatched up at random, in his hand, and scanty hairs thrust anyhow below his turban. Well is such a magistrate called *the gaoler of God* ; for, like a rotten quince, he is always found at some place on our road to make us slide.

‘ She has fallen into the vile sin of adultery, let her be far from me ! ’ he mumbles. ‘ Sink into the earth, O fornicating sorceress, dissolute sinner. This action constitutes adultery ; thus is it defined in the sacred writings. I must make my report to the tribunal ; never was such a thing in our pure quarter ! Here are the people assembled for audience ; let the infamous wretch be brought before them.’

‘ Oh, sir, the man concerned was black,’ says one ; ‘ for like sniffs after like. We saw the mule in action.’

## *Zenan-Nameh*

‘But, my dear friend,’ breaks in another, ‘the man who ran in front of us from house to house was quite yellow ! We cast sacks into his way to trip him up, but God permitted his escape, the fish got back to sea.’

Each tells, in short, a different version to the tribunal ; it is notorious that the Turk cannot express himself. ‘In our country,’ says one, ‘the eyes of pigs are washed with coffee.’ ‘I do not hide any horns under my cap,’ another says.

Meanwhile the lover sighs in his own house ; he reties the string of his drawers with trembling hands. Fear joins his disappointment : he has brushed the rose a moment, what if it were poisoned ?

If the lady has experience, she wins the Imām over to her own side. ‘Come,’ says he, ‘we will examine into this matter with my wife.’ He leads the poor woman to his house, and she slips some deniable gold pieces into his hand. Khwājah Efendi trembles with pleasure, and declares her pure.

Let us admire the prudence of this magistrate, and pray the Lord to keep all slander from us. Accusations are so hasty, conjunctures so unlucky, coincidences so deceitful. Has no woman ever tripped before ? Is this stain refractory to soap ?

### *Fazil-Bey*

The lover remains unknown, and the judicial sticks are left virgin. Many women of unsullied reputation have ridden in the same cart.

And escape is even more certain for those who reject women, and cultivate the society of youth. The Imām will still contrive excuse for you, even if you are caught in delight. It is enough to cover your sin with a pious appearance. I, personally, judge pastry by taste, and not by what it seems. 'This child,' you should say, 'is the son of my aunt ; I am bringing him up to be the prop of my old age.'

It is otherwise if, by the will of God, you cause a birth ; then nothing remains but to carry your sighs into exile. Also, if some very old intrigue be found out, you are indicted before the Kadi, or even the Wazirial Divan. Among young dandies a man may seek his pleasure according to his fancy : the Kadi will send him back to his house with his head high, a second Alexander of Macedon.

### *Armenia*

A GAZELLE in his solitude impudently seeking pleasure, that is the type of the Armenian woman. And the traditions of the Armenian woman, which she preserves intact, are a mean body and speech, an ugly gesturing and a lustful, troubled walk.

## *Z e n a n - N a m e h*

The young Armenian men are infamous. They say they are like the Greeks, but the Greeks are not disgusting. The crow would walk like a partridge; now he cannot even walk like a crow.

*Whom fortune proves beyond his merit  
A phænix glory shall inherit.*

*Strive not to rise by mimicry, a ball  
Set on a cupola can only fall.*

*Of most complacent sweetness girls may be,  
And boys of a most sweet complacency.*

*There is a beard for every ear of corn;  
For every nightingale a rose is born.*

*The last foul intercourse of Rammer's day  
Is the white body of insomnia.*

Thus, we see the Armenians restlessly imitative of the young Greeks, studying even their language. But what to me is a change of idiom? If a snake talked Greek would its tongue be less a horse-fly?

*His turban caught alight upon the quay;  
The gathering crowd propelled him from the sea.*

### *Fazil-Bey*

*'Tis not through eating lentils, I have found,  
That men go mad and roll upon the ground.*

*All Greeks from infancy can mask a fact  
Even from one who takes them in the act.*

*Who seeks in beauty either sage or saint  
Will come against a barrier of paint.*

*Though if you speak all gain and none's offended,  
Yet silence once it's broken can't be mended.*

If a Croat go into the market, they cry to him from the porter's haram: *Come up, come up!* For the Croat calls forth desire in the Armenian, the door is open to him; there is one tether for the horse and mare. The fine giant and the lady of the house, gunpowder and fire, begin to play together. But there are still well-born people in the world.

### *Jews*

WOMEN of the Jews, you have insolent glances and you stink; you are as loathsome as you are deplorable; there is neither beauty nor whiteness in your filthy flesh; yet for all the unpleasant yellow colour of your bodies they are as insipid as white snow. You are coarser than the Russians.

### *Zenan-Nameh*

Man recoils flayed from the first of the gallant act. God keep me from the very thought of it !

Each woman is to all, each girl to all men, each boy to every woman. It misgives me that there is a greater confusion even, but I am not interested. A Mussulman has sweet fruit in his mouth, and needs no bitter.

### *The Bohemians*

YOU sing the praises of lust in the public square, dark wanderers, then practice it beneath a tent. If a single pretty boy be born into your tribe, you take him willy-nilly. I have known you about the two halves of the earth with lies upon your tongue, you greedy bitches, and shame and filth upon your face.

### *Roumelia*

YOU see the Padishah lying upon your breast, Roumelia, and the point of your breast carries the place of his women.

They have the ways of the beauties of Stamboul, silver and purpled flowers in a harmony ; they lean towards study, and are swift learners. It is enough to use sweet words to a Roumelian woman, and she will grow wise.

I must say no more of this delightful country.

## *Fazil-Bey*

### *Albania*

YOU walk haughtily with an eye to abash misfortune, you women of Albania, but you are ugly. I have seen nothing attractive in your face or body. Yet it might be possible to find one pleasing among you, except in manners.

Yet the sons of these women are cypress-like ; their coquetry would ravish a hermit.

Whither am I straying ? My song is without echo ; my praises fall from me. This is not the first time an author has gone down a bypath into brevity.

### *Bosnia*

THE Bosnian is voluptuous, and melancholy whitens his head, for his savage woman refuses its anodyne to the snake of Venus. There are so many men, and yet the rose collective remains unbroken. How is this possible ? But it is perhaps as well that they escape one vice.

A foul people, it uses iron and fire to quicken its beasts. May its traces not be effaced by the compassionate wind ; Hell take it, fire to fire !

### *Tartary*

KNOW this, good amateur, the glass reflects the ugly as well as the beautiful, but it will not show the Tartar.



## *Zenan-Nameh*

It is a special condition of the women of this race to be like monkeys.

To be a man or boy or girl of Tartary is to be conspicuous in a thousand, even were that thousand chosen for plainness.

## *Georgia*

IF your tongue recalls the lion's roar, your body is softer than wool, moons of the third quarter, Georgian women. Your cup could not satiate or be over full ; its wine seems ever sparingly measured, yet it is triumphant, not of desire but of regard, the same to men and women. It leaves no peace to the soul, O Georgian, of girls or boys ; it is a phoenix net. How could we win you with our riches, seeing that your body is the treasure of Kārūn ? Surely it is only by cunning you are made a prey. She does not desire the death of any man, O student, therefore give proof of moderation and tenderness, and then groan. It might be done so.

Keep a salt eye if you would taste her sweetness. Since she fears death for any God-created thing, bring sighs to bear.

But I would not lead you to suppose she is as the Circassian, at whose retreat no man may drink.

## *Fazil-Bey*

### *Circassia*

OTHER faces may seduce the enchanted sun, yours call down Venus self, Circassian girls, so many broken fragments of the moon, so many crowns of prayer, the power of the palm tree and of an army ; the moon bends out of heaven.

She can move her feet with grace, and look out of her eyes with tenderness ; the scarlet juice of the vine runs in her body ; her tongue takes fire. She pours the water of ablution night and day ; there is no speck found in her.

The Georgian may surpass her in beauty, but the Circassian is more attractive. A veil of chastity is about her ; her sincerity is as clean as her body, her body as her faith, her faith as new-fallen snow.

There would be none to compare with her, were there no Georgians to slake all thirst.

### *Franks of Constantinople*

MIRACLES of the breath of the lips of Jesus, and flowers of Mary's garden ! Also, O Frankish women of Constantinople, one glance from you is better than many wine shops.

What is this coloured garment and this sapling shape ? Whether he be Greek or foreign, he must cry for mercy ; the winner is won with her. Each church is open for her gallant

## *Zenan-Nameh*

meetings : please God we have committed every sin with her !

She will have no trace of beard, she will have beardless lovers ; and, shame upon me ! I would return to that unvirile age for her. Let all beards and negroes and black hair retire abashed from her ; she is a bird yet in the woods for such.

Retire, black hair, into black places : such is this beauty's resolution ; creatures who live under fountain water, being bearded, should only rise at night. The Stamboul Frank can show herself more reasonable.

### *Interlude on Female Bathers*

**L**END AN EAR IF YOU LOVE BEAUTY, FOR I am going to speak about the bath. Though a certain shame attaches to people who require a private room, the baths themselves are a place to stay in joyfully till evening.

They have spruce women hairdressers, and rubbers with wide red drawers, and upright little female servants, scrupulously clean, their buttocks bound about with gold shawls.

Their\* nālin\* make them two andāzehs\* tall, and give them a pretty way of walking. It is charming to see them tear their veils into a hundred pieces before the rubber comes. They have a delicate quickness.





RAWAB SALAR JUNG BAHADUR.

### *Fazil-Bey*

One of their coquetries is to pretend to look for fleas ; their image mirrored in the washing basin is as the sun's disk on the sea ; they give a soft light to the baths. They pin their dark hair with henna-tinted fingers, branches of coral in black amber ; or make their dark hair a shadow for their breast until it shines like a moon on a midnight without stars. Their nakedness dims the natural light ; their peshtemāl\* is a source of divination, not of covering ; their breasts are hills in a garden of spices, are gilded lemons, making me most melancholy, for now I shall have no superlatives for the women of Paradise, if I ever get there.

But if one of them falls pregnant, she is harried and mocked, not only by her own kind, who call her *big-belly*, but by the female bathers. These send her for unnecessary fruits and sherberts. One wants a candle, and another soap ; another has no lif\* ; one throws a cup of water at her, or whips her face with herbs. All lift her peshtemāl and ridicule her bottom.

There are so many gallants in this other room that it sounds like a marriage feast, except for the music. They wear the fūta\*, and one tells a kindling story, while the others raise the amber of the chibouk to their lips, or the nargileh's serpentine. One fits the bowl to the stem to pleasure his friend.

## *Zenan-Nameh*

It is rare for these frolics to end without quarrel; then one will fight with nālins, another with a cup, and all like devils. Listen, if you will, to their exchange of courtesy:

‘You hang about the sweating-room at night.’

‘Whore-hunter!’

‘I would prefer the pig-pier at the port!’

‘Go there, and we will love you.’

‘My friends are Pashas where they are not Beys . . .’

‘With moustaches of gold thread?’

‘The nasty child measures us with his eyes.’

‘Yes, who enjoyed the slipper fallen from the roof?’

I leave this bath, where they are wrangling thus like drabs, and go back to the women’s bathing place, where every feature is a moon or trap or instigation to praise God.

These spent flowers cluster upon the divan, hovered about by the rose fingers of slaves. They have scented their legs with ambergris and aloe wood; I sigh from desire.

One looks for a flea, and behold! a thousand facets of nakedness; one uses her couch as a painted carriage, she is a cup of pearls.

She stays in the cooling room till nightfall and leaves it as if broken by fatigue, but gracefully; a painful and most enticing languor is in her step.

### *Fazil-Bey*

What have I more to say ? Does the intelligent listener need an explanation ? The connoisseur will know the necessary words, and use them unembarrassed. A young man in his freshness is better than a frontispiece.

### *Along the Danube*

YOU cast haughty glances over each country, O woman of Moldavia, as if you sat upon the throne of Ferīdūn, and you are right to claim a certain distinction, for you are the ugliest bitch on earth.

Retire from the embraces of Bulgarian women, good student, for they have the most shameful diseases.

Look not upon a Croatian woman, either, even if her body and her way of life seem pure ; she differs in all things from the youth her brother. He is made of rose leaves that a morning air might bruise ; he is a place of waters, a love star, a cup to taste upon the couch, with sighs and simpering ; he is a light palm tree to be made to waver.

### *France*

DAUGHTER of Rome's God, fruit of the garden of Jesus, your body is a silver ingot, French woman. Its attire is thick, and has a



### *Zenan-Nameh*

various ornament ; you outnumber the men ; they neglect youth for you.

A little dog must lie in your breast like a child ; under the veil of your breast. This beastly fashion is accepted among you. But the worst that happens there is that they make an art of discord ; now especially\*.

Praises and thanks be to God for His Destinies ; so one is a pig and one is a bitch.

### *Poland*

AS his hair-cloth to an ascetic, so is your marriage veil to you, my Polish woman, a cloak for all disorder ; yet your face is tenderness. You have rivals in straightness and the charm of walking and in soft speech ; in cunning none at all. Hearts fall about you.

Certain of your games are not innocent, reminding of Jewesses.

### *Germany*

YOUR face draws the eyes of the monks like a candle, German woman ; your glance is a tavern, the bishop gets drunk there ; you are a treasure of sorcery, a thing of sable and crystal. Hers is a chastity with gallant ways ; she is very clean about her secret. Her body is a worthy garden, the thorns swing round to it ; the palm

## *Fazil-Bey*

tree dies down before the cypress, the mouth fails.

## *Spain*

THROW aside the veil, my curious student, for it hides the daughters of the world. The Spaniards have no usual women, they make spells by singing, and on guitars. They carry proportion to enchantment.

Look at this body, look at these breasts. Where now is the silver jasmine? These things are made of broken pearls.

In joining she writhes as a drunken harlot. If her husband likes her so, it is not for me to quarrel with his taste. Yearly the boys and girls troop over from Morocco; the people of Fez infest there; not to see the tombs.

## *England*

ALONE of the Franks you wear the black curl of Hind upon your forehead; and you have gracious ways; Northern gardens have forgotten their roses upon you, you are in debt to the nightingale. You desire coloured and ornamented dresses, without wantonness. But I hear a turmoil of assemblies, a sound of words and voices. *Raise your hand at the moment of striking only*, that is their secret.

## *Z e n a n - N a m e h*

### *Russia*

YOU follow the vile way of the church and adore the crucifix, O saffron, cross-eyed Russian woman. If your body be not as white as snow, it is as cold, also there is a secret place of infidel fire within it. Foh ! you would be at it night and morning.

You feign virginity better than Abyssinians ; your temperament is annoying and unwholesome. You prostitute yourself. A troop could not extinguish you. Your ways and face are sad ; you cannot stop either at noon or midnight, or for the inconvenience of the moon, or pregnancy. It is the thing adultery you know, and not the word ; and there are goats. You are common and public ; there can be no quarrel because of you.

We might as well be in Bohemia, where every town is a bastard factory. There are a thousand or two thousand harlots in every city ; the villages do it also.

Thus every year the government finds its profit in new soldiers ; the nation congratulates itself upon these things.

### *Holland*

IF you are learned, that is because your tongue is difficult. Being yellow and of bad morals you cannot light desire.

### *Fazil-Bey*

Your boys are as graceless as your girls ; they are both like Jews. We would not stay with you for the love of fifty.

### *America\**

O GARDEN of hope, O novel Paradise, your hideous daughters are like female animals. They carry for seven months only, as if they would be brought to bed twice every year.

Your man grows old before his time, being of little body and less wit. Even I could not guess, curious student, what passions there might be among such weakness.

### *To the Women Themselves*

IF I have laid bare the shame of some, has any died of it, O veils torn down, O flock that I have pictured ?

My lines have told of the heaven within the drawers, I have strung them as pearls on gilded thread, with here and there, as a coloured interval between the women, a jesting verse or two.

### *On the Author*

I COULD read off the years of my life from the lines of my face for you ; but the virtue of a talisman binds my tongue, though gold could loose it.

## *Zenan-Nameh*

I have an illusion of strength, but, if I am to credit the stars, my tomb lies near me. Let none walk on this road reluctantly, for pardon may be at the bottom of the deep grave. There is a riddle hidden under this word, and who would not weep tears of blood to resolve it? Each gentleman goes to rest in that valley, the path to that prison is trod by every man. Let these things crown my work, and let the friend of women follow the right way.

### *The Disadvantages of Amorous Excess*

TAKE courage, desirous slave, servant of never ending lust, and arm yourself with axe and sword against your master; half measures are without virtue in a passion that dries the source of life. This precious water gives the glory of health to the face of man, and strength in his members; it is the life of the wit of the writer, the essence of the vigour of the body and soul; it is the oil of the flame of the heart, and decks the spirit with limpidity. That is why there are so very many old women. He who makes pleasurable contact his pastime sees himself become unnaturally thin; his body loses strength, and any other occupation ends in illness. Beauty vanishes; paralysis and gout, catarrh and nervous trembling follow in their

order, and how can he support them? The peace of the body is no longer upon the face, and he that was young is old. To haunt the private rooms at the bath is the quickest road to this.

Has there been one in whatever multitude, asks Luqmān, who has become habituated to the carnal act? A pretty boy gave way to this excess in a certain year, continues the sage. 'I have not the strength to control myself,' he said, 'my temperament bears me irresistibly to the delights.' 'You who are my life,' his father answered, 'with the help of God we can bear anything.' 'Then why has He not endowed me with patience,' questioned the youth, 'at least once in the week?' Alas, alas, adds this most wise distributor of salutary counsels, the boy spoke of a week, but not a week remained to him!

This manly substance is the basis of life's beauty; carried upon it, life courses through the soul.

You can spread it to build ruin for  
yourself, or lay by a store of  
it, for it is life.

NAWAB SALAR JUNG BAHADUR

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## *Conclusion*

I AM IN A NEW TROUBLE, AND EVERY moment swells my vexation. I accepted a task obediently, and performed it faithfully. I made a poem, and, since it is devoted to women, I may call it full of pleasantness. The Eden of pleasure is the substance and the essence and the end of it; I have praised extravagantly, according to the rules of art.

The orphan cuts his own birth cord, says the proverb; I have received no help from any man; yet, from start to finish, I have set easy verses in terraces of stanzas.

I have dissected all the women of the world; and fallen into the cheating net of one of them. I wrote to prepare a bed on which to enjoy my lover; but again my expectation has been deceived.

This work has been infinitely troublous to me. I have had to question the army of harlots; to give my ear to each husband on the intimate secrets of his wife; to listen to what Adam said to Eve. I have used the resources of my memory, and brought to light that which was hidden there. The constraint of this watching has not been without labour.

Dissimulation is not known at my village, there

## *Fazil-Bey*

is no trace of deceit in me ; as any land has been described to me, my qalem has so pictured it. Where has my tongue changed one word for another, or memory not been honest ? The rift in my silent qalem serves thought as a mouth with which to speak ; if it has been deceived at times, yet I think it will raise a pleasant breeze.

Out of regard for my lover, I have spent much of the Turkish language ; I have surveyed many lands for her ; yet now that it is finished, my work seems no more than a jot, a tissue of slight poetic webs to the ignorant, though born of long consideration. They did not come to me as pearls found perfect in the shell ; they have needed severe and judicious revision after their finding ; they are no untouched virgin dawn.

I did not wish my lines to imitate others, or that their hope should be based on memory ; I desired them rather to be drops from the breast of our own sea, motes caught in the moon's ray of our peculiar night. When a lamp has been lighted, it is easy to fire a thousand candles from it afterward. May our lamp heighten the light of the wise and lighten the darkness of the fool a little !

So strong do I feel myself in this kind that I await a rival with complacence. He will say



## *Z e n a n - N a m e b*

that he has made many quick verses on this subject ; do not believe him.

I had to make a collection of peoples, a laborious bouquet of the nations. Sometimes I had to capture an almost unknown tribe (for every man is not a townsman of Shiraz) or question in Arabic, or waste my time on empty-headed dangles. As word differs from word, and phrase from phrase, so have I distinguished general from general disposition and personal from personal. I have been the Gabriel of distinctions.

I have practised a deception on you ; and now I repent of it. The wise man's tongue is ever uneasy, though he retire to the discreetest corner of his house. I have not been foiled in my amorous expectation, I have rather become the familiar lantern of the haram, I know its passages as a light habitually carried along them. I have conquered my lovely antagonist, and she was astonished ; she is the pearl now hanging from my eyelid, my tears are changed to a rain of honey. This comes because I never asked for pity, though my breast was slashed and my eyes were water pipes.

The tomb thirsts for my wine ; the morning's hope is dead before the end of day ; I leave the candle of my life to burn as it will. Yet

*Fazil-Bey*

I pray to God that I may remain to enjoy the companionship of my lover for a space, nor cause anxiety ; that I shall never take desire in a net, nor cast away rubies. To be firm in the face of him is to bury a knife in the breast of misfortune ; but the athlete cannot throw down love. Grant, Lord, that my love appear ever, as the Virgin Mary, fair to me ;  
and that *Zenan-Nameh* win  
your praise ! Amen !

*The End.*



## NOTES

PAGE

2	<i>Lam</i>	Arabic-Turkish-Persian letter of the alphabet, having a final scimitar-like curve.
3	<i>Saz</i>	a kind of three-stringed guitar.
8	<i>Kiāghid-Khaneh</i>	a fashionable waterside walk in Constantinople.
9	<i>Ferājeh</i>	a mantle.
10	<i>Qaftān</i>	a vest.
10	<i>Shalwār</i>	puffy trousers worn by both sexes.
13	<i>Hulagu-Khan</i>	the Tartar chief and grandson of Chinghiz-Khan, who invaded Bagdad in 1258 and overthrew the last of the Abbasids.
20	<i>Irbām</i>	the dress worn by the pilgrim to Mecca.
22	<i>Anqa</i>	a gigantic fabulous bird.
29	<i>Shamli</i>	meaning both a Syrian woman and having a skin covered with black blemishes.
35	<i>He of the double mantle</i>	Plato.
36	<i>Chelebi</i>	Greek or European gentleman ; formerly a prince of the blood.
37	<i>Kārūm</i>	Korah. See Numbers, XVI.

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|----|---------------------------------|--|
| 37 | <i>Better a mountain</i>        | compare the French<br><i>Qui terre a guerre a.</i>   |
| 38 | <i>I want the moon</i>          | meaning that it is easy<br>to get rid of a wife by<br>demanding the impos-<br>sible from her.  |
| 39 | <i>Is a drake</i>               | <i>Is our flax . . .</i><br>frivolous excuses, but<br>the first may refer also<br>to the presence of the<br>husband at home.               |
| 40 | <i>The church without bells</i> | referring to the Moslem<br>ordinance forbidding<br>bells in Christian<br>churches.   |
| 41 | <i>If your soul wanders</i>     | addressed to borrow-<br>ers, meaning: 'You<br>say I am rich, but how<br>do you know?'  |
| 42 | <i>Mary's cloud</i>             | a common allusion to<br>the incarnation of<br>Christ, quoted when<br>the virtue of a woman<br>is being praised on<br>insufficient grounds. |
| 52 | <i>Their</i>                    | seems to refer to the<br>'little female servants'<br>only.   |
| 52 | <i>Nālin</i>                    | wooden bathing clogs.  |
| 52 | <i>Andāzeh</i>                  | equivalent to the Eng-<br>lish yard.   |
| 53 | <i>Peshtemāl</i>                | bathing cincture wound<br>round the middle.  |

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PAGE

53	<i>Līf</i>	palm fibres used for soaping.
53	<i>Fūta</i>	Male bathing apron.
56	<i>Now especially</i>	written during the French Revolution.
59	<i>America</i>	It is perhaps needless to say that Fazil refers to the Red Indians.



*The Education of  
Wives  
(Ta'dīb ul-Nisvān)  
from the Persian*



*for*  
C. F.

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

PROBABLY no item in our series, as far as it has yet gone, is more capable than *The Education of Wives* of appealing directly to the reader without preliminary comment or explanation.

*Ta'dīb ul-Nisvān*, literally *the Education of Women*, was printed at Teheran in the early 'Eighties of last century, and in spite of angry research on the part of its victims the secret of its authorship was successfully kept. According to Monsieur G. Audibert, who was First Dragoman to the French Legation in Persia at the time of its appearance, and of whose amusing version I have availed myself, this pamphlet was written by one of the numerous princes of the Persian Royal Family. It had a success of scandal in the women's world, and provoked more than one lively response; notably *Ta'dīl ul-Rijāl*, *The Putting of Men in their Place*, a bitter counter-criticism from the pen of 'A Great Persian Lady.'

The couplets and other poetical quotations, in their occasional inappositeness, give a very fair idea of the author's method.

This delight in casual decoration at any price, which has already been noted in *Fazil-Bey's Zenan-Nameh*, is characteristic of a great deal of Persian, Turkish and Arabic writing, and often produces unintentionally humorous results. When, for instance, the present author wishes to assure the wife that, if she can

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### Introductory Note

*command a pleasing prattle, her husband will ask her to speak to him, he finds any pleasant stanza containing the words 'speak to me' sufficiently near for his purpose, though the one he selects, with its picture of amorous shyness and extinguished candle, must inevitably introduce quite the wrong atmosphere. Again, he wishes to provide an appropriate quotation for a man crouched bitterly over the fire burning rue-seed to avoid his wife's evil-eye, and because certain lines are concerned with that charm, he insists on using them, quite regardless of the fact that they are part of an instruction given in a love poem. In certain instances it will even be seen that when he desires to say something particularly cutting about one sex, he is forced to borrow from a satire written on the other.*

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### Foreword

A FRIEND, WHO WAS AT ONCE MY CONFIDANT in quiet hours and my supporter in the moments of life's stress, complained to me one day.

'It was in my time of careless youth,' he said, 'when the down on my face was black as a crow's wing and the fruits of desire hung heavy upon my tree; time's bitterness had not yet turned my hair to the white of camphor, nor had my youth endured those trials which age brings with it.

*The foliage of my cheek was red  
As any on the judas-tree;  
And adolescence, be it said,  
Was greener than the grass in me.*

'Though eighteen Springs had hardly passed since I saw the light, I had already turned my thought, in obedience to the ordinary custom of this age, towards a marriage with the daughter of a distant kinsman. The wedding took place, and thus, from my earliest youth, I experienced all the burden of a family and household. Thereafter eleven years of precious life were wasted in the society of a companion who, though chaste and faithful, possessed not one of those interior qualities which constitute the

## *Ta'dīb ul-Nisvān*

charm of women. Such was my portion until the day and the hour arrived which Destiny had fixed for her, and she was taken from this world. As we had loved each other in spite of everything, I was consumed by the grief of our separation for a whole year, and swore never to think of taking another legal wife, especially from a house in easy circumstances. Also I imagined, in entire good faith, that I was the only man who had ever had to support common life for several years with a woman of difficult temper, forgetting that

*The proof that each of us is Adam's son  
Lies in our heritage, affliction.*

and that

*Not only mine the supplicating hands  
That from this Valley are raised up to God;  
A multitude as many as Its sands  
Rise with them to inform against the Rod.*

‘ But during a talk which I had one day with a friend, I took occasion to approach the subject which perplexed me and led the conversation on to women.

‘ “ There is little doubt,” I said to him, “ that no one in modern times has suffered as much as I have from these creatures.”

‘ He looked at me in a friendly fashion, but I

*From the Persian*

saw that there was a smile upon his lips, so I asked him the reason of it. Then, instead of a direct answer, he gave me a few pages which had been written by a certain eminent personage, advising me to read them over in my hours of sadness.'

Now as I myself had been the victim of women, I begged my friend to lend me the impressions on that subject which this other had given him. He did so willingly, and now I in turn take up my pen to publish these notes, with amplification and division into ten chapters.

If the little work be so fortunate as to please the reader, my joy will be extreme, and I will ask him to place this book in the hands of his daughters, so that it may serve them for instruction and increase their welfare. But if my effort should be received with public disfavour, I beg the reader to remain silent on the small

feminine imperfections which I attack and

to accept, in this place, the

humble excuses of a

humble author.

UNAPPROVED





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## *Preface*

CONCERNING LITTLE GIRLS WHO HAVE BEEN SPOILT  
BY THEIR PARENTS, CREATURES TO BE  
MET WITH EVERYWHERE

AND HOW COULD IT BE OTHERWISE WHEN  
A every female, from tender babyhood to  
puberty, eats savoury dishes, drinks the best  
water, and hears nothing all the time but: *Little  
Lady?* ‘You who are prettier than the moon,  
little lady, little soul,’ says every nurse, and  
naturally the little soul is soon convinced she is  
as fair as a peacock of Paradise. And her  
ears are stuffed with vapid compliments of this  
kind: ‘I would like to be offered up in sacrifice  
to your face, infinitely precious darling, for it  
shines like the moon! Never be so foolish  
as to marry a man with a great turban and a  
wide mantle\*! Your husband should be a  
king, and no poor disinherited son of nature!’  
The unfortunate child who, from her birth  
until she enters her husband’s house, has heard  
nothing but such idiocy, ends with her head  
full of it.

Thus, thanks to the natural stupidity of the  
weaker sex, which is ever ready to give credence  
to such things, a young wife is doomed to  
initial days and nights more gloomy than my  
own existence, which is black enough!

At once a crowd of old women run to her,

## *Ta'dīb ul-Nisvān*

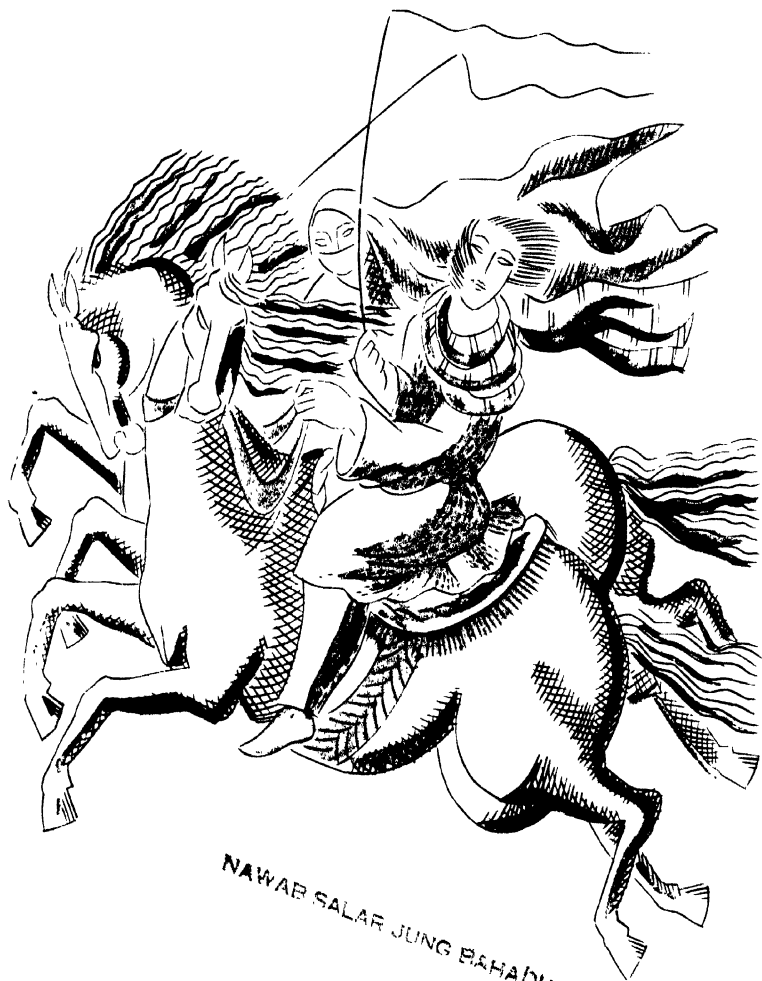
heaving a thousand and a thousand sighs to see her subject to a husband who, they say, cannot appreciate her. These beldams seem to have no idea that we men were created specially to suffer and to abide vexation in the battle, before we can win those possessions which reconcile us to a sordid world. Wives, children and a household, for instance, are not acquired without anguish, and yet a man lacking such ties will find no joy in this world or the next.

It must be confessed, however, that it is at times a terrible anxiety to have a wife and children, and that this anxiety extends, as does the joy, to either world ! There was a poet who wrote :

*Now that you are safely caught  
In the fond domestic knot  
It is time to say : ' Good-bye  
Leisure and tranquillity ! '*

Yet it is certain that without a wife and family and wealth we cannot prosper here below or even in Heaven above.

Marriage is the greatest trial of anybody's life ; we marry blindly and only realise afterwards that we have left our mother and father, our brother and all our kind, for a single woman and a sea of grief. Yet marriage cannot be too difficult a problem, when a merciful God has



NAWAB SALAR JUNG BAHADUR



*From the Persian*

made immutable law of it. Those who refuse to submit to this law either, while understanding its advantages, intentionally pretend that they do not, or else are really ignorant ; the man of wisdom and courage does not hesitate to set his yoke upon his neck, because he knows that, though it crush him, it is Heaven's will that he resign himself. Well might the poet exclaim :

*By day you see what marriage is  
And count its inconveniences,  
Yet in the evening none the less  
You fondle your unhappiness.*

Is there not something almost of the supernatural in a young girl thus renouncing all her affections, at a minute's notice, to be joined to a stranger whom she does not know, whose name she often has not even heard ? Yet this line may be truly quoted of her :

*She has preferred you to all men and things.*

And from this moment she will unhesitatingly give all, from her last farthing to her last breath, for love of this husband. What is here she would not do to win his heart ? She will even believe in the magic power of those so-called sorcerers, those charlatans who leave their native countries to travel and exploit the world. God pardon me ! if he show her a

*Ta'dīb ul-Nisvān*

paper scribbled in red ink, as a holy writing, and a little ass's fat, she will buy these things. She will exchange a bladder of Tartary musk for a very ordinary donkey's skin, or her best perfumed powder for a pinch of dry dung. She will eagerly bid for a hyena's genitals, since these are well known to be the finest charm of all. And she will obtain these things for the sole purpose of making her husband love her.

*Love turns the girdle of a Moslem saint  
Into the cincture of a Christian priest.  
He is the fool of time, and has not ceased  
To show his wanton power's divine extent.*

Poor souls, do you not know that the only marvel of these charms is the stupidity of those who credit them, and that the rest is nonsense ?

*Do not seek for coloured stuffs,  
But for conduct in your loves.  
His wood is here to guard and warm,  
Not to burn and do us harm.  
Love lies in gentle conversational arts,  
And not in a hyena's private parts.*

An old cat-skin should be thrown away, and not kept as a sort of capital to produce an income of desire. Not even beauty can enchant love, but a good disposition only.

*From the Persian*

Manners and modesty are talismans indeed; it is even better to behave well than to speak well.

*Wit has bright arrows, if you hold no shield  
Of answering wit 'tis wise to quit the field.*

Better an ugly woman than a sharp-tempered beauty. The snake dappled in fine blacks is one of the most beautiful of creatures, yet we flee at the sight of him.

*All the schemes of beauty kill not  
With the certitude of Nature,  
To have shaped a mirror will not  
Turn the shaper Alexander\*,  
And to cock the bonnet bravely  
As we see some learned creature  
Will not make a fool speak gravely  
Or a Justice of a gander.*

An engaging disposition, a felicitous education, are far more necessary to a wife than either beauty or adornment.

*To feed a man with sighs  
Until the creature dies  
Is not the way to move  
Another man to love.*

A peevish houri is less desirable than a dīv\*; a maleficent dīv with a happy disposition would be preferable to such a houri.



*Ta' dīb ul-Nisvān*

*He who is given  
A docile spouse  
In a quiet house  
Is loved of Heaven.*

Love demands tender words and pleasing ways.

*This is how his courtiers chid  
Sultān Mahmūd the Ghaznavid :  
'Your friend, Āyāz, is black as coal  
And yet you lend him all your soul ;  
This is as if the bulbul chose  
A scentless and discoloured rose.'  
Sultān Mahmūd made answer then :  
' 'Tis not with flowers as with men,  
Nor do I love his gloomy skin,  
But a white glory found within.'*

Āyāz was only a negro and yet, thanks to his excellent character, he could win the heart of a Sultān. Strive to acquire such a disposition as Āyāz had, O wives !

*Seek for such beauties as may lie within  
And not without a woman's skin ;  
If those without and not within you find,  
Then turn and show her your behind.*

Religious tradition teaches us that women should be avoided, whether they are good or bad, and

### *From the Persian*

that no sort of confidence should be reposed in them. The basis of confidence is intellect, and have not God and His holy Imāms proclaimed the intellects of women to be incomplete? His Holiness the Commander of the Faithful, 'Alī son of Abu Tālib (may the salvation of God be on him !), made this disapproving pronouncement : ' Be sure of this, O man, that woman is religiously, mentally and legally an imperfect creature. As touching religion, she is forbidden to pray or fast during her monthly periods ; as touching intelligence, the law demands the evidence of two women to that of one man ; and as touching succession, the man receives the double of the woman. Carefully abstain, therefore, from bad women, and flee from good ones. Never obey a woman, even when she counsels well, so that she live in no hope of some day making you do evil.' What can be expected of a sex so judged by the friend of God ? And what can a poor devil like the present writer find to say in addition ? It is certain that I shall never convince a single one of the tribe, and that all will attack, abuse and call down curses upon me. But that does not matter. I shall keep my word  
and write the few chapters  
which I promised.



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1. *Of Character and Conduct which become a Wife*

THE FIRST CONDITION OF TRUE LOVE IS reciprocity, and it is this exchange of feeling which we must seek before all else. However fully captivated a man may be, in the end he will renounce his love if he has to complain without ceasing of its object; and when this happens we may say with perfect truth that, if the heart gains nothing by foregoing its affection, it loses nothing either. Let us consider the case of two lovers who see each other only for an occasional hour at the rarest intervals and after the greatest difficulty: because they cannot achieve these cherished interviews except at a cost of trouble, they pass them, it is certain, without either tedium or dispute, whatever their ordinary characters may be. It is easy to show patience for an hour or for a day, but how is it possible to be patient for a lifetime? All faults are evident in a continuous companionship, and disgust or satiety are apt to be the result. Therefore the wife should carefully use every good quality that she may possess to keep her husband from recrimination. If she does this, his desire for her will, instead of diminishing, grow greater from hour to hour. Many women who leave

## *Ta'dīb ul-Nisvān*

much to be desired in the matter of beauty have won their husband's hearts in the way which I suggest. In the eyes of the man whom they make happy their ugliness will be preferred to all the beauties of the world, and he will say :

*Seek no paragon to find  
With cypress waist and collied hair,  
Rather seek a heart and mind  
More enduring and as fair.*

I know that in acting upon this advice we lay ourselves open to hear strangers, and even relations say : ' That animal's taste must be most depraved if he can love so hideous a wife ! ' But that animal calmly and contentedly lets them talk and then, without leaving hold of his wife's garment, says to her in their presence :

*By your cherished head I swear  
No one in the world shall move you  
From the single golden chair  
In the heart of him who loves you.*

And to set against this, there are many perfect beauties who stand in the judgment of their husbands as more poisonous than a snake or scorpion. For all their beauty, these unhappy women have often much to complain of in their Destiny, and are reduced to the pursuit

*From the Persian*

of some priest or Jew in hope of obtaining a talisman which shall make them loved.

*Very many years I squandered  
Thinking love had learned to roam,  
Up and down the world I wandered . . .  
He was in my heart at home.*

He is in your hearts, my good women, and it is entirely your own fault if you cannot find him. Ugly women often have the greatest possible success in love, because they know their lack and strive to replace it by qualities of mind and heart.

*I have plucked fruit from all Desire's trees,  
And none more full of excellence than these.*

On the other hand, those who are beautiful are so convinced of their beauty that they nurture all the disdains, and hold an exaggerated opinion of themselves. That vanity which dominates all else in them prevents them from a clear understanding of what they do ; and they let their heads be turned by the insensate flatteries of old women, a class which never tires of praising the charms of the body, and repeating :

*Seek we love on earth, or even  
Love in Heaven,  
Coquetry's the surest road  
To Love's abode.*

*Ta' dīb ul-Nisvān*

The poor darlings stray from the resting-place through this absurd advice, and lose the road entirely. Soon they perceive that they have fallen into disgrace with their husbands, and have condemned themselves to live for the future in the midst of sighs and grieving. Well might they say with the poet :

*All joy is fled, only not I depart,  
But stay with flooded eye and roasted heart.*

You should not rely for one moment on the seduction of your charm or consider it an excuse for departing even a hair's breadth from the path of decorum. Learn to withstand your own caprices, and, in every circumstance of life, be subject to your husband.

*Only by riddance shall we prosper still;  
Give God your life and cast away your will.*

The wife owes passive obedience to her lord, and must remain amenable to his orders without a thought of how or why. Let her transpose, in application to herself, the lines :

*Living I shall still believe  
It is more blessed to receive  
Your injustice than to bear  
The justice of the lesser fair.*

Even should her husband plunge her hand into

*From the Persian*

the fire, she will do well to say that this flame is as pleasant as a bed of flowers\*. When her husband demands a certain favour of her, let her beware of uttering a single sigh, for such a sigh at such a time can leave its mark on all existence and trouble a whole life.

*Do not inflame, or else be true to love :  
Before you make a gurunāg\* your friend  
See that your house is also large enough  
To lodge his elephant from end to end.*

When a woman maintains an opposite opinion to her husband, and goes so far in her conceit of infallibility as to say, with the wife in the Turkish tale : ‘I grant that you are a man, but so am I,’ then love between them has become impossible.

*Your thought is mine,*

says the poet, and that is what a woman ought to say.

She who could unite all such qualities as I have suggested would be a heavenly gift to suffering humanity, but alas ! will one such perfection be found in a hundred thousand women ? To advise them is as practical in me as to seek to measure moonlight and make a powder out of water. It is probable, it is even certain that, instead of listening to me, they will cry among



### *Ta'dīb ul-Nisvān*

themselves : ' Let the washer of the dead bear off this drivelling chatterer ; let the beast's own blood serve him as beard-dye\* ; he would teach others and knows nothing at all himself ! ' And the reason for all this is that the poor creatures cannot realise that

*For two on earth to have one less  
Heart than two is happiness.*

Intimate union between man and wife is a blessing straight from Allāh. It matters little if the two die young. Is short and perfect happiness to be counted nothing ? But such felicity depends on the wife, for she alone can create and nourish such a love. Also, as Hāfiz said :

*Teach good, O Hāfiz ; if the people learn  
So much the better. That is their concern.*

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## 2. *Control your tongues*

**O**N LIPS OF HONEY SPICE A SINGLE TRACE  
*Of bitterness is double a disgrace.*

Indeed a single imprudent word may have the most terrible consequences. Beauty, be careful to control your pretty tongue, and remember this wise maxim :

*That trick of bitter speech in her  
Is quite as foolish as unpleasant,  
It gives away a character  
And often turns away a present.*

and also this :

*The wound a lance gives may be cured at need,  
A wound the tongue makes is beyond remede.*

It is true that wounds caused by the tongue will never close, or at least will leave a life-long scar. Also it is obviously absurd for a wife, who has just hurled a myriad disagreeable phrases at her husband, to imagine that he will forget this exhibition entirely, provided she afterward excuses herself somewhat in this way : ‘ You know in time of war, my dear, we do not pelt the enemy with bread and sweetmeats.’ You will have spoken a profound truth, Madam, for we make war with cannons and guns, or sticks and stones ; but allow me

to point out that, after a stupid quarrel with your husband, it is a little late to offer him sweetmeats.

Quarrels are fatal to friendship and kill desire ; if they take place in the home, then every word exchanged in them stays graven on the substance of the heart, and eats it like a sore. Therefore let a wife never give way to anger ; and if her husband happen, with or without a cause, to be ill-humoured, let her strive to dissipate his temper by redoubling the grace of every word and action. This wise proceeding will work on an angry man as water upon fire. Also, in my opinion, even if she be not at fault, a clever woman should take the offences of her husband upon herself, and ask his pardon for them. If to this subtlety she adds a few masterly caresses, her husband will grow ashamed, either at once or later, and she herself will profit in a further way, for he will certainly grow to love her all the more. It is better to say gently : ‘ I was wrong, and those unfortunate words escaped me,’ than to camp in front of your husband and gesticulate and exclaim at him. If you adopt the latter course, rough words may follow and with them many years of grief. Even when a millionaire’s daughter has married a penniless stoker from the baths, she should be respectful and modest in her treatment of him,

*From the Persian*

for the sole worth of a wife lies in her love for her husband.

If a wife finds her husband badly disposed and wishes to put an end to this state, instead of setting up a lamentation she had far better take the first opportunity of slipping from the room, without a trace of sulks upon her face ; after a minute she can return and, denying herself a single irritating word or slightest allusion, begin by every means in her power to fill him with more cheerful thoughts. Alas ! I know too well that this is not easy, and that very few possess such force of character.

*You will not lift six hundred pound  
From off the ground  
Without three hundred pound of bone  
For skeleton.*

A man, even the most manly, is frequently not master of himself ; how then shall a woman always be self-controlled, having so frivolous a heart, so weak an intellect ? Yet if we wish to preserve either love or friendship, we must learn to drink the bitter draught of patience.

*The lips of wise experience repeat :  
Patience is bitter but her fruit is sweet.*

It is better to cut out the tongue with a sharp sword than to use it in a domestic dispute, for

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repentance follows on the heels of quarrelling. Anger makes self-control impossible, friendship is rent on verbal thorns, and no needle in the world can mend it afterwards. Though peace is made, it cannot be sincere, and a certain rancour will remain in the heart for ever.

*You cannot hope  
To mend a broken rope  
Without a trace  
Of knot to mark the place.*

The woman who says : ' I only answered after all, and not to resent an unpleasant remark would have been unworthy,' talks like a fool, and drives away the very love that she would keep.

*Better go barefoot in the rain  
Than walk in shoes of pain ;  
Better go anywhere at all  
Than stay at home and brawl.*

Neither love nor amity will choose that house as an abode where the wife spends all her time in wrangling ; but war will soon find out that place. And do not, I repeat, count upon a reconciliation, for it is in the nature of things that, once a war has been begun, each interval of truce will be followed by a battle.

It is not good that a woman should speak even

*From the Persian*

ever so little rudely, were it but in jest; for though joking is certainly not forbidden, if it contain no unseasonable word or wounding allusion, yet, for the sake of a jest, to criticise her husband's actions, to interrupt him in conversation, to complain of him, and above all to strangers, are fatal habits in any woman. One word leads inevitably to another, and any conversation from which it may be deduced that a wife is complaining of her husband should be carefully avoided. As a matter of fact such conversation is always repeated afterwards in a slightly different manner, and thus misfortune is innocently brought about.

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### 3. *Do not Grumble*

A WIFE SHOULD NEVER GRUMBLE ABOUT HER husband, even with a hundred reasons for doing so, since complaint will be inevitably answered by complaint. Recrimination engenders coldness and, however close the union, ends in grief. And tell me, good wives and husbands, have we so much to complain of in each other?

His Majesty, the King of Kings\*, has written :

*I love a face without a veil, my dears . . .  
The least becoming veil of all is tears.*

And after these lines, is it not true to say as the Arabs do : *The word of the King is the king of words?*

Nothing is more disagreeable to hear than perpetual complaint ; young wives should leave this indulgence to older women. Grumbling in an extreme case is, with a disunited household, understandable ; but, where there is true love between man and wife, it cannot be excused. Recrimination invites misunderstanding and woos a most fatal issue. Yet I have met more than one woman who knew no content except in discontent, and more than one who was always on the look-out for a pretext

*From the Persian*

to give rein to temper. A certain wife said to her husband :

*I have no reason to complain,  
Yet since it is my nature to,  
I do it time and time again  
And shall continue so to do.  
You say I have no moral strength at all ;  
The fault is yours, who have no physical.*

And if these women who never cease from whining would only whine with discretion ! But, as God is my witness, they always bray like she-asses and afterwards claim they have not raised their voice. A curse on these screechings which take the ass for model ! The Koran has said : *Of all uproar, that of the ass is the most terrible.* Never think that loud speaking is a merit, never believe those flatterers who say : ‘ Mā shā Allāh\* ! the sound of your voice is like a cannon, it rains like the firing of guns out of your mouth ! ’ Can you not understand that such compliments are ridiculous ?

There is nothing more detestable than to see a woman gesticulate, with one arm at her hip, the other raised, bouncing from side to side and foaming at the mouth, protruding her eyes out of her head, curveting like a lunatic, tossing her hands about, rolling from knee to knee and raising a dust to the seventh Heaven. These



actions are accompanied by words more deadly than poison. And the unfortunate husband is in imminent peril of a nasty knock.

But what is more charming than to hear a woman speak with grace and gentleness, as one talks to a convalescent? What more seductive than little agreeable gestures and delicate ways? Prattle increases desire, and pretty conduct entices the eye. If a woman who possesses both these ornaments ceases from speaking, it is from the heart and soul that we beg her to continue; and although a man has a thousand cares, she will make him forget them, cleansing his heart from the rust of trouble, and he will say:

*Speak to me, sweet and fair one, have no fear;  
There is no stranger but the candle here,  
And if the candle fill you with affright  
I'll cut off his red tongue for you, my dear.*

Alas, all that I say will hardly profit the sex; and I only write it to satisfy my conscience. Explanation and understanding of such delicate matters can scarcely be given in a book; rather should every woman seek to bring these qualities to birth in her own person, and strain to acquire out of her very self those virtues to which I have given so much praise. Let her not say to herself: 'If I have an unpleasant character and

*From the Persian*

a venomous tongue, by Allāh, I know it well, and it is my nature. Is it my fault my voice is loud and cannot be moderated? God made me so; if you want a better wife, apply to Him.' I have the honour to answer you, Madam, with this couplet:

*Take my advice or your own way ;  
I have said all I had to say.*

Your reasoning, Madam, is the acme of folly, the very height of stupidity, for everything in this world has need of apprenticeship. If a woman be not a dunce all through and once sees her fault, she understands its ugliness and strives to amend it.

Remember that bitterness can be changed to sweet by alchemy, and brass to gold; and I have just taught you the alchemy of conduct.

If you have good will, my lessons shall change you to the purest gold; if you are of those who refuse to listen, that is your own affair: doubt-

less you have some definite goal  
before you, into which I  
have no inclination  
to inquire.

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#### 4. *No sulks!*

A WIFE WILL DO WELL TO TAKE THINGS, AS far as possible, on their good side and, above all, never to sulk.

I have heard it told of an old woman, who lay at the point of death (May God hold her in compassion, for her testament had really some good in it !), that she thus expressed her latest wishes to her daughter : ‘ My child, promise me never to sulk with your husband in regard to these two things : the table and the bed. For if you sulk at table, you sulk against your belly, and that is annoying ; and if you persist in refusing blankets, you will catch a cold, which is more annoying still.’ Now without grounding my argument too far on this pleasant recommendation, I say that sulks are certain, in the long run, to engender discord ; therefore a wise wife will carefully abstain from looking sullen.

*Better the judge, the prison, and disgrace  
Than sit at home before a puckered face.*

A gay and gentle conversation and a laughing, joyous countenance are the two things which best suit loveliness. May God preserve us from those unbearable creatures who grumble without ceasing and sit down dully, as if they were mourning widows ; whose faces are more sour than vinegar, whose sighs are stronger than



NAWAB SALAR JUNG BAHADUR



*From the Persian*

garlic ; whose arms are ever under their chins as if they had lost their dearest, or their steam-boat\* had foundered, or as if they had laboured cruelly, from morn till eve, to win bread for their husbands !

What is it then, my dear ? And what has befallen (good God !) so to over-excite you ? Nay, were your beauty equal to the light of the moon and your virtues incomparable, yet, in your present state, a dying man would not take water from your hands. In short, what good can come of such a mood ?

Never forget, O wretched women, that these husbands of yours, each according to his degree, have had to endure many troubles during the day, and that it is for love of you they have done what is permitted, and sometimes what is not permitted, in life's battle. When evening comes, they have the right to peace within doors, where they can forget for a moment the fatigues and cares which must begin again next morning. What calamity for the poor man if he is greeted, even as he crosses the threshold, with those scenes and grimaces which the women of our time have made the fashion !

*See that with triple care you  
Avoid an evil wife,  
And pray to God to spare you  
This Hell-in-Life.*

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## 5. Of Carriage and Behaviour in Society

TOO SWIFT A PACE IN WALKING DOES NOT suit a woman; but little graceful steps will make her bearing utterly attractive, above all if she takes care to hold her head erect, so as not to seem bowed down.

*Where'er you go men see a flame, a star ;  
The star's yourself, the flame my sighings are.*

Only street lovers turn their heads and move their haunches as they walk ; a modest woman must pay great attention to each movement, and try to preserve a noble yet enticing carriage. Then surely someone will quote this line of her :

*Who has just passed? Ah, give me back my soul!*

A well-bred lady does not move her arms too much, nor does she keep them glued to her side like sticks ; and if she be thus careful of her arms, is it to be thought that she should keep a certain part of her body grinding like a mill-stone ? Such a movement is only graceful when it happens naturally, a result of elegant walking. Too eager a gait and an exaggerated movement of the hips are the mark of beauty in quest of passing pleasure ; grace and good taste avoid such things.

*From the Persian*

A woman should always strive for these verses to apply to her :

*She's the risen moon unrisen,  
Rising she's the cypress tree ;  
I, already in her prison,  
Will she take my life from me ?*

and, indeed, if she will but put my counsels into practice, she may soon become an object of universal praise and admiration.

Unless she is alone, a woman should be on her guard against every trick which may awake disgust. Thus she should leave the habit of picking the nose or blowing it in the hand to older women. Why should not one who is still of an attractive age keep a little handkerchief by her, to ensure that her nose and eyes are ever in a state of perfect cleanliness ? This handkerchief will be none the less useful to her should she cough or sneeze, for she has only to put it in front of her mouth to save her unfortunate husband the unpleasantness of being sprayed with matters which only distantly resemble rose-water. To be drenched in such a manner inspires the most profound distaste.

Also, when she approaches her husband, a wife will do well not to throw herself boisterously upon him in a cloud of dust. It is when she sits down prettily and gently at his side



*Ta'dīb ul-Nisvān*

that he is likely to say : ' You are charming from head to foot, my soul ! What a craftsman is this God who has drawn so great perfection out of nothingness ! I have seen no comparable marvel in the world ; you are the sun building his nest in a moving cypress ! No tongue could tell of your quality, no pen describe your beauty ! ' But to win such compliments, a woman must have the serious desire to merit them. When she sits at her husband's side, let her be careful not to take up all the room, but rather to kneel at a little distance from him ; then, if this position eventually tires her, she has only to rise up and walk about a little, or go apart and stretch herself for a moment, and her fatigue will be gone. What she must emphatically not do is to involve herself in her chādar\* and begin snoring ; still less must she squat down and cuddle her knees with her arms as if she were a widow and inconsolable. Let her remain smiling and gay, and fondly press her husband's hand from time to time, so that it soon steals round to caress her waist, and it may be said amorously of them :

*Now the lover drains her eyes  
Till his senses manadise,  
Now it is the mistress frees  
Hair to his audacities.*

*From the Persian*

Often a pleasing babble will distract and occupy a man, even for a whole evening ; and, far from feeling either boredom or fatigue at being reduced to a single companion, he will, after such a session, desire her all the more. But though there is this virtue in chatter, a wife must always attend to what her husband says, and never interrupt him ; also, if she wishes to be near him, she should place herself at his side, and not in front of him. The poet says :

*Ab, sweet to have her by ! But not so sweet  
To have my love directly opposite !*

ANAL.

She must not help herself up with her hands like a pregnant woman, but should rise gracefully, even affably, so that these lines may fit her :

*When she sits down the storms of our desires  
Down drop with her,  
And when she rises, lo ! a thousand fires  
Rise up with her.*

She should be careful not to sit near enough to the fire to roast her face or have it smothered in smoke ; also, when the room must be heated, I strongly advise her not to use a gursī\*, since it makes the flesh yellow and flaccid. As a last word on this matter, I warn

her not to follow the example of those old women who sit full in the sun for hours together as if they had lost a hundred thousand dear ones.

As to farding, I urge my gentle readers to be moderate in their use of antimony and only to put on very little rouge, so that their colours may still appear natural. There are too many women who paint their cheeks and lips, and even their eyes and nose, most terribly. And when they have done so, they imagine that their face is like a bouquet of roses, while in fact it exactly resembles a monkey's bottom.

The Europeans use paint very little, and they are right in this abstention ; for what God has created will always be superior to our improvement on it. But I hear the Persian woman answer me : ' If what you say is true, how is it that so much rice powder is made in Europe, and exported in such large quantities to Persia ? ' To which I answer that these products are manufactured in the first place for profit, and in the second for the sole use of the senile coquette in Europe, or the withered woman of Irān. One who is young and at all beautiful has no need of paint and rice powder, nor will one who is old and ugly grow young and beautiful by using them.

*From the Persian*

*If God has given grace to her  
She'll thrive without the hairdresser . . .  
What profit shall it do the blind  
To black the eyebrows of the mind?*

I admit that women who are naturally pale in colour will take no harm from a little rouge, as long as they only copy the tint of life with it. Can an absolutely red nose or red rims about the eyes be called a beauty? In fine, when paint is used it should be impossible to tell whether nature or the perfumer has been at work.

If you have delightful great brown eyebrows, beware of touching them; and if, by evil chance, you have them scanty and of an ugly colour, be satisfied with a darkening and slight lengthening.

Do not let stray hair grow on the face, saying that so-and-so has a great deal more; yet do not be pulling it out every eight days: it is enough to perform this operation once in two months.

*I need a heart that's broken,  
That parting has undone;  
My yearning, though unspoken,  
Would speak to such a one.*

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## 6. *How to Eat*

**A**T TABLE A WELL-BRED WOMAN RESTS ON her two knees at once, displays a smiling face, and does not prattle. She eats of every dish with pleasure, whether it be good or bad, being careful to take small mouthfuls only, and to place them prettily in her mouth with but the tips of her fingers. She does not swallow large pieces or chew too quickly ; she does not fill her mouth so full that either things come out of it or she is compelled to breathe through her nose.

Nothing is more detestable than a noise of jaw-working which can be heard for miles. Therefore chew slowly and without noise, selecting none but tidy fragments, and managing them daintily. Avoid indigestible dishes or any which leave a nasty smell ; for no one wishes to hear his wife perpetually belching. The simple belch is not pretty, but it is even worse when the smell forces your neighbours to question whether it does not proceed rather from below than above. Avoid any sort of ill-humour at meals ; if the dishes are not successful, they cannot be remade in a moment, and recriminations on the subject come better after the meal than at it. Yet I have known women who kept all their bile and evil temper for the table.

*From the Persian*

If the husband complains of bad cooking, the wife should soothe him with meek words.

Surely those few unlucky mouthfuls which we needs must swallow to live will be better digested in peace than if our companion begins to knock the bowls against the jars and the jars against the bowls? Yet alas! is there one among us who has not assisted at such feminine scenes while eating? A woman will break a plate, or throw the bread along the ground, or tear the table-cloth, screaming: 'Call in the servants, summon the housekeeper! Let each farrāsh\* prepare his sticks; let everyone be flogged!' Or a mother vents her rage on the heads of her wretched children, bidding them behave better or eat more tidily, without a cause. Or another calls some poor innocent of three or four terrible names, because he has asked for something. 'Disgusting little glutton,' she cries, 'may you die of a shameful sickness, may you burst!' And she adds so much abuse to this abominable wish, that the little creature rises and leaves the room in tears. Then the unfortunate husband, who is obliged to endure such riots, feels every mouthful stick in his throat and recites the Āyat ul-kursī,\* a thousand times imploring God for death. He rightly thinks that to eat barley bread, or even to

*Ta'dīb ul-Nisvān*

starve, would be preferable to sitting through another such entertainment.

*From eating opposite a furious  
Man when he eats, may God deliver us !*

And, merciful Heavens, is it so difficult for a woman to sit down gay to meat ? Is it impossible for her to eat in peace, and to rise tranquilly, thanking God ?

*Ingratitude for what we are receiving  
May drive all kinds of benefit away,  
But fervent thanks for what He gives us may  
Encourage Allāh to continue giving.*

I know nothing more terrible than a woman's bad temper breaking out at meals. It is no less odious in man, but the subject of my book is woman. I cannot repeat too often that disturbed meals are fouler than a dog's blood, and that those unlucky men who are exposed to such calamity drink bitterness from a full cup indeed.

Also, when a woman is beside herself by the middle of a repast, when the cook trembles and the husband has no thought but flight, tell me, can there be any profit in the food itself, or can it be digested ? No, a hundred times no ; a mortal illness or a violent poison would be better for the stomach than such a meal.

*From the Persian*

Even in the best families it is not rare to meet with women who, through sheer vileness of temper, remain three or four days without dipping their hand into a dish, and content themselves with a little bread and cheese. Others prefer actual starvation, and will not eat at all for several days.

Now I ask you, beauties of every sort, whether it would not be better to eat according to your appetite, than to get so angry that your husband's life becomes impossible? It seems to me that it would be wiser and more profitable.

*How often will an angry phrase eclipse  
The beauty of the speaker ; therefore shun  
All ugly phrases, sweet. This is best done  
By closing to and sealing up the lips.*



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## 7. *Of Bodily Cleanliness and the Use of Certain Perfumes*

NOTHING IS MORE UNBECOMING IN A WOMAN than to make use of animal fat for her head and face and hands. To go about like a cook smelling of burnt grease does not seem to me to be an embellishment. Even when a cosmetic is made with a thousand batmāns\* of rose-water, it will still contain fat and be therefore filthy. The disadvantage of these compositions, in which fat must always play a considerable part, cannot fail to strike those who use them. Greases, waxes and oils were good enough for old women in a past age, who thought such substances agreeable, but if the woman of today wishes to be attractive she will carefully avoid them. So do not believe those people who say that such-and-such an oil will make your hair thicker. No oil has ever increased the actual number of the hairs, though it may sometimes help their growth and improve their quality.

As to ways of dressing the head, any woman who has the least good sense will see that if her hair is scanty, it is ridiculous to wear it long. When hair is both long and thin it is like nothing so much as a horse's tail. Only long tresses which are also thick can be delightful ;

*From the Persian*

what is more hideous to see than two mournful strands hanging down on either side ! The woman whose hair is not thick would do well to curl it and wear it short. There is no better frame for the face, and each of these wayward curls may catch you a heart. As the poet says :

*Let not the separate tendrils of your hair  
Escape to meet and quarrel in the air,  
Lest a dispute so exquisite entice  
The swords of all the world to take a share.*

Let us pass to the question of perfumes : I do not decry them upon a woman, but rather find them agreeable and quite in place. Let her have no fear of using them on her body and, sometimes, on her clothing, for their effect is delightful and even intoxicating. None, among all the artifices of the toilet, is so suitable to excite love and to increase desire, but they must not be abused ; there must be no imitation of those Arab women who keep pure musk about them until it produces giddiness and migraine. Essence of roses is, to my idea, one of the best perfumes, and quite the best is 'Itr-i-fitnah\*, which does indeed, as its name implies, bring trouble to the senses. No other odour can give so great a pleasure. Water of roses too, though it has not the merit of the distillation

and is no more, as it were, than a pale copy, is by no means harmful. In a word, all perfumes are agreeable, provided that there be nothing in them to cause suffering ; if there is, it is better to do without.

The application of henna to the hair is not in itself a bad custom, for there is nothing unpleasant in the odour of this tint ; but the habit of using it to colour the hands I find detestable, for after two days the dye assumes a dirty colour and wrinkles the skin. Some may like the nails and ends of the fingers red, others prefer to have them left their natural colour. In man all tastes are natural.

But with woman it is not so : her part is to study the tastes of her husband and to conform to them always. To my own way of thinking there is nothing prettier than white hands and feet, and we must believe that this is also the opinion of God, otherwise He would have made us with red hands. It is difficult to imagine a more beautiful colour than that which the Creator gave to the human kind, especially its arms and thighs.

*If once her arm or thigh  
I half espy  
I feel desire's flea  
Start biting me.*

*From the Persian.*

And this hand of yours, which God has created in so graceful a shape and with so beautiful a colour, should be kept with the greatest care. Let it always be clean ; wash it with soap and water at least once a day, and be careful to use only a delicate and perfumed preparation for this purpose. My dear friend, never touch anything that may blacken your small hands. They should have no speck of dust on them, and be ever well-tended, so that they are ready at any moment to be kissed. Always wear silk gloves, for a dirty and greasy hand cannot fail to disgust the heart. But if the hands are white and well-kept, every man will hope to be offered something to eat by them, and to take and crunch it greedily.

*If he who pours the cup  
Display a clean and wanton hand  
There is no saint in all the land  
Who will not drink it up.*

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## 8. *Concerning Dress*

CLEAN AND ELEGANT CLOTHES ARE INDISPENSABLE; it is a great mistake in any wife to let her husband see her dressed in ugly, old, or dirty ones. Her attire should shine as bright as the peacock's tail, and be changed at least once a day. This is especially true of undergarments, which may be even fitly changed more often lest they give forth an odour. In extreme cases the same linen may be worn on two succeeding Winter days; but it must be shifted twice a day in Summer. Do not be swayed by a spirit of imitation, and say: 'So-and-so does such-and-such, and so must I.' God knows there is no law against imitation, but the man's approval must always have a prior claim. In this matter you may take whomsoever you wish for model, but if the copy fails to please your husband, you had better abandon it. To argue that because some other woman dresses or acts in a particular way and is not criticised, you may do the same, is utterly absurd; she may be in the wrong though she is not blamed for it, and you put yourself in the wrong by following her. The sole right is to please your husband, and all possible praise from others can never justify something he does not approve. You will never

*From the Persian*

find love in the home unless you accept this principle.

Certain fools of my acquaintance force the poor devils whom they call husband to pay for very expensive robes, and then never, even once, give him the pleasure of seeing them wear what he has bought. The gowns are used mainly to adorn a cupboard ; if they are worn at all, it is only on great occasions or at a women's party. What vile ingratitude ! You should dress yourself out at least once or twice at home in these beautiful garments ; your wretched husband has been hard put to it to afford them, and you may spare him this slight consolation. It is his dear desire that you should have the best in the world, not only of clothes, but of wit and beauty. If he sees anything at all which can do honour to your sex, he cries : ' God grant that my wife may have as good ! '

I readily admit that all men are not created with the same tastes ; some, for example, like their women's clothes to be short, others prefer them long. The intelligent wife should study, follow, and even anticipate her husband's preference, by adopting some costume which particularly appeals to him.

I am acquainted with many men who, either through weakness of character, or in pure chivalry, pretend to have neither wish nor

## *Ta'dīb ul-Nisvān*

preference ; they approve their wives on every occasion, crying ; ' Yes, my dear one, my very dear one ! ' feigning ecstacy over every trifle, and raising their Mā shā Allāh to Heaven. But this does not prevent him from throwing a little rue seed or a small piece of the cord of his drawers into the fire to avert the evil-eye of his companion. Nor will he fail to recite some stanza appropriate to the occasion :

*An evil-eye  
Watches as you go by ;  
Cover your face  
In every public place,  
Or burn the rue  
With fire as bright as you.*

The average wife does not understand that her husband only plays this comedy for the sake of peace ; therefore she swells with stupid pride, saying to herself : ' I make of him what I will, thanks to my charm and beauty.' In reality, as soon as the woman has departed, the man thanks God that he has been able to fool her so easily ; relieved of her presence, he mutters a thousand sarcasms, and passes all her moral and physical disabilities in review. Constant and boisterous approval is worse than useless ; heart-felt content is the prime necessity

*From the Persian*

of married life, and no man who is driven to lies or dissimulation can ever feel that.

The husband who says : ' I am not afraid of women, and therefore do not need to lie,' is either an imbecile or a hypocrite. You ask me why ? The answer is simple, as God lives : in the first place, man is bound to fear any creature of low intelligence ; and in the second, only a fool will ever allow himself to forget that his fortune, his credit, his children, and even his soul, rest in the hands of his wife. And unfortunately we cannot change a wife as we change a shirt or drawers : frequently we have to keep the same one for a lifetime. We are caught, we must be patient and endure, we must pray to God for some change in her disposition.

*'Tis imagination slips  
The leash of discourse,  
Words in this coarse  
World are useless, close the lips.*

O God of the Mussulman, bring now some order into the affairs of true Believers, for they have great need of it. Which said, let us return to our subject.

The really well-bred woman, on hearing some remark of her husband relative to her dress or other matter, endeavours to correct herself.



## *Ta'dīb ul-Nisvān*

Instead of frowning and sulking and staying cold as a statue, she should smile and count herself fortunate that he has given an opinion. If he says to her : ' Your dresses are really much too short, my dear,' she must not be so foolish as to become annoyed and throw everything about her into the air ; at the very worst she should remain silent. If she does answer, it must never be rudely, thus : ' Leave me alone ! You bore me ! Look for a better wife ! I may be disagreeable : God made me so ! You cannot change me ! ' After a few idiotic remarks of this nature, the poor husband will very soon regret his humble blunder. It was difficult for him to speak, he forced himself to do so, and the result is :

*He strove to mend it, and has made it worse.*

In trying to correct the defective cut of his wife's garment, he has ruined his own position. ' Come, come, my dear,' he says, ' I was in the wrong ; you did not quite understand me ; I was not referring to your clothes at all.' And for the rest of his life he will find himself forced to approve of what she says, and to copy her every action. And even so he will have spoken and acted to no purpose, for these sacrifices will not be enough to appease her anger ; he will be compelled unwillingly to fulfil his duties as

*From the Persian*

a husband in order to calm her and reduce her inflammation ; and if he should be unlucky enough not to make good at once, there will be nothing left for him but flight.

The most frequent cause of misunderstanding in a household is that the wife will never take a jot of blame, even when she thoroughly deserves it.

*Gentle lovers seek to bind  
Two hearts in one heart, as we find  
Two almonds in one almond-rind.*

And surely if the woman is not a fool and has some little liking for her husband, she can realise that he only finds fault with her in her own interest, and as a friend.

*He's the true friend who mirror-like will dare  
To show your face its every seam and crack,  
Not he who comb-like goes behind your back  
To part your imperfections hair by hair.*

An intelligent wife anticipates the wishes of her husband, and thus assures peace and happiness in the home. When two persons love each other they are safe from the chances of this world, and pass their trivial span of life in happiness. If they grow poor, love is their new fortune ; they can be valiant on a little barley bread and an earthen jar of water.

## *Ta'dib ul-Nisvān*

Let us not allow our bitterness and vexation to deteriorate a life which is already short and sorry enough. A poet has said :

*There's no real pleasure at Life's vaunted feast,  
The wine they serve's indifferent . . . very . . .  
Strove to get drunk a hundred times at least  
And never once got even merry.*

The one preoccupation of an ill-matched pair is to get rid of each other by any means. Are not a thousand foes better than one such intimacy ?

Nearly every domestic misfortune is due to lack of intelligence on the part of the wife. But, however foolish she may be, she can at least use love as a loadstone to draw her husband's heart and to attach it utterly.

*A woman with a single sidelong glance  
Invades and overthrows a town,  
'Tis her own fault if after this advance  
She cannot make one street her own.*

It is clear that if a man has a cold and indifferent mistress, he has wasted time and trouble in finding her, for she will never teach him the drunkenness of passion.

Love is a most capricious sentiment : sometimes he takes possession of the heart at a bound, sometimes he only penetrates it very

*From the Persian*

slowly. Just as a woman's qualities may attract him, so her faults may repel him. Those who claim that their passion is eternal and that they are sure of their own heart, are simply talking nonsense. Such at least is my opinion, and I have grown old in love.

However great a woman's love may have been, on the day that her husband answers the call of the Highest, and even before his body has left the house, she is thinking of some substantial young man with a view to a second marriage. (I swear by the glory of God that this is true.) Her grief is all on the surface, and she measures every man at the funeral through her tears, to see which has the most powerful neck and is therefore best able to do her business.

And such a woman, it must be noted, passes for honest and decorous : as for those others who do not pass for such, may God never tempt me to speak of their behaviour on a like occasion ! They tell that God gave to Solomon (Salvation upon him !) a crippled child by Balkis, and that the King suffered such grief from this misfortune that the angel Gabriel appeared to him, saying : 'O prophet of God, the Merciful takes pity upon you and will cure your child. But first you and Balkis and your minister Āsaf ibn Barakhyā must agree to tell me your most

## *Ta'dīb ul-Nisvān*

secret thoughts.' Then all three turned in the direction of Jerusalem, that Holy House, and Solomon said: 'I confess to God that if two men of my mighty kingdom bring a dispute to my tribunal and one of them offers me even so little thing as an apple for present, I am tempted to give judgment for him, though he be in the wrong, that he may depart in joy and be content with me.'

Then said the wazīr Āsaf: 'You are my witness, O Lord, that in spite of all my power and administration, I sometimes think of being dependent on the King no longer, and even of reigning in his stead.'

And Balkis said: 'Though I am the wife of the Master of the World, the Ruler of both Men and Jinn, yet when I see a young man more beautiful than Solomon, his unknown youth brings trouble to me, and I feel a desire to become his wife.'

It is true that I have only received this legend verbally, and never read it, but if it be true that Balkis, who was endowed with such shining quality and virtue, could have had such thoughts, what may we not expect from ordinary wives?

Though faults to a lover's eye seem often virtues, they still are faults in fact. You should strive, therefore, to be of good conduct, so

*From the Persian*

that love remains to cast as it were a veil over  
your imperfection.

Once love has flown away, he never returns,  
and soon the curtain which he has lowered over  
your faults is raised indeed.

*Take heed lest you affray or start  
The wild bird of my heart,  
For once it flies our window-pane  
It will not come again.*

Do not be too proud of your beauty ; do not  
listen to flattery ; love your husband for him-  
self. If you do not follow my advice you will  
be sorry for it in the end ; your days will pass  
without profit, and when it is too late you will  
regret your foolishness.

*Use, girl, to gain your end  
The cypress figure now,  
Wait not for time to bend  
The cypress to a bow.*

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### 9. *Of Bed and Sleep*

THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THE chapters which I have to write, and all I have said till now reaches forward—I speak without exaggeration—to this important matter. God, in His infinite compassion, has created night, that in it man, who works so hard and tires himself so much by day, may take his indispensable rest. Let us picture to ourselves how terrible life would be if we had to employ our nights as we employ our days.

*The day was made to work and think in,  
And not for giving way to drink in.*

It has been written that when business is over and night has thrown her curtain across the world, then is the time to rest and take a little wine, for its colour brings back the sun that has just set.

In the quiet of the night each may surrender to his taste. It is the season of calm and intimate reunion. It is only at night that man may savour to the full the two chief pleasures of the world, the joys called love and sleep.

There is no rest comparable to a night's rest ; the sleep, be it never so long and dreamless, of a man who has to spend his nights in waking

*From the Persian*

and to rest by day, is never worth an hour of the authentic sleep of darkness.

Some women think to secure a whole capital of love by sharing a bed with their husband. This is a strange error ; even a terrible mistake. It is a custom which came about in a horrid way. It was certainly one of those old and ugly wives, who dare still to think of love though they are far gone in years, and who fall like crocodiles upon their husbands as if to swallow them whole, who first conceived this miserable idea of a bed for two. And now the force of routine has made the use of such things general.

Now if a young wife does not sleep by her husband's side all night, she will find herself surrounded in the morning by a crowd of sycophants, or vegetable-cleaners as we call them ; these will rest, facing one another, on their knees, their hands below their chins, and utter shrill sighs, burning regrets for the unhappy bride. 'That I might die for my daughter !' cries her mother. 'Does my son-in-law think her parents could not have afforded the mouthful of bread he condescends to give her ? The poor child is accursed ; she was born under a bad star ; she is left to sleep alone at night.'

In time these idiotic recriminations oblige the



## *Ta'dīb ul-Nisvān*

husband never to sleep alone again ; and thus that love which the woman would retain is driven away. It is true, though, that in an extreme case even divergent characters can endure one night of sleeping together.

*A night of pain is not a year of pain,  
A bitter cup but not a sea to drain.*

Yet it is a great mistake to wish to sleep together night after night. Even a very Lailah and Majnūn in love will end by repelling each other, and find their desire vanish, unless they sleep in separate beds. Wise men and all the leading sages agree with me in this, and every intelligent person who has had experience.

It is related that certain philosophers went to consult a doctor, and said to him : ' We are very much concerned for a friend of ours who is madly in love with a woman. He has sacrificed all he has to this infatuation, and is in a fair way to spoil his life with it. His illness seems to us incurable, for, in spite of all our advice, the fever only rises from hour to hour. What can we do for the best ? ' ' Try to arrange that your distracted lover shares the same bed with his mistress,' answered the doctor. ' Let their breaths be mingled, and I guarantee a cure. The extravagant passion will subside, and love give place to abhorrence and satiety.'

*From the Persian*

The doctor's prescription was exactly followed and, little by little, the love abated upon either side.

This tale has an excellent moral, for one of the chief causes of the aversion which always develops in such a case is that the couple have to inhale each other's breath. And there are many other reasons, apart from this most serious one. God, for instance, has not endowed all people with the same nature, and it is obvious that two married persons cannot go to sleep and wake up at precisely the same moment. There are also other respects in which two temperaments are likely not to agree: each behaves in a different way with regard to heat and cold, for example, or health and illness; one goes to sleep immediately, while the other stays awake and grumbles; one snores, and the other has a cold in the head and cannot breathe; one is an early riser, the other likes to sleep for most of the morning; one feels cold, the other feels hot; one coughs in bed, and the other spits in bed. Thus a mutual couch becomes a torture and gives birth to repulsion.

To revert now to ancient wives. It is a pitiable thing for a man to be chained to one of these old, ugly, and peevish antidotes for passion, these most exacting and terrible of all females. She is not satisfied to cling to her husband and

## *Ta'dīb ul-Nisvān*

to insist, with scene on scene, that he shall satisfy her lust, but she contrives to make the unfortunate man her servant and even her slave as well. And observe that in the end she always gets the upper hand, for the man submits through his desire for peace, and blindly goes each evening to rejoin her in their common bed. As if he should say with the poet :

*Though I'm as feeble as a tiny ant  
I'll grit my teeth and give you what you want.*

But there is worse to follow ; for if the man chooses to turn his back on this fury, when he is once at her side, he catches a shower of blows in the ribs ; she may even throw him out of bed, or from the house itself. What can a poor devil do then, if he finds himself out in the road, especially during Winter ? He can only creep back with his tail between his legs, and kiss the beldam's hands and feet. If she condescends to forgive him (and she always does so condescend) he is trapped till morning, and must fulfil his marital duty to calm the lady's nerves. He rages in vain ; if he values his repose and honour he must make good.

I myself know many married women who, though no fools, insist upon a double bed ; and woe betide the husband who is imprudent enough to hint that this favour is not

*From the Persian*

altogether to his liking. If he does so, his wife will fall into a fury, and cry : ‘ Man is a poor and worthless breed ! Its instincts are so depraved, its tastes so evil, that it cannot be happy except with immoral women. If you were with a harlot, you would not have to be begged to keep her in your arms till morning ; but because I am honest, you play the anchorite.’ Now, ladies, do you want to know why we men are sometimes happy in the company of harlots ? It is because they are more obedient, more submissive than our own all-beautiful wives. Harlots as much as you will ; but when we tell them to sit, they sit ; when we ask them to go, they go ; and this is something. That is why we can find it in our hearts to prefer these improper women to our well-born wives, even when the latter come of our own stock. If you are satisfied for your husband to clasp you in his arms without experiencing the least desire, if you are content for him to pretend to love you, then provide your double bed and he will obey. But if you aspire to a genuine passion, welling from the bottom of your husband’s heart, then set your face against idle gossip, and resolutely refuse to share his bed, even if he seems to desire it and begs insistently. When a man loves a pretty, well-formed, and agreeable woman, there might seem, at first

## *Ta'dīb ul-Nisvān*

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glance, no grave objection to her sharing his bed if he prays her to, yet I strongly advise her to remain deaf to his entreaties. And this refusal will increase his love of her, man's chief desire being, as the Arabs wisely say, all for forbidden things. On the side of pleasure, too, it does not greatly matter to us in our dreams whether we sleep alone or not, for in that state we are, as it were, not of this world.

It is when one does not sleep that it is pleasant to be together; it is only when waking that we can enjoy each other's presence in a bed.

It is for all these reasons that I urge a separate bed for the woman, though it may be placed near that of the husband if desired. I also advise all wives to make a complete toilet before bed, and as this is a matter of paramount importance, I shall not hesitate to consider it in detail.

To my mind a simple chemise of transparent stuff and a bright-coloured petticoat will advantageously replace the day's apparel. I am not myself devoted to jackets, and if the wife has set her heart upon such a garment, I insist at least that it be small and light, and that the pockets contain nothing which may remind us of the leather bag of Mullā Khatīb, the conjurer, out of which all manner of things could be produced at will. She should also be careful

### *From the Persian*

not to wear necklaces or pins or needles, or anything of that sort. The use of a silk handkerchief as a head-dress seems to me a pity, and I much prefer a little cap. The best of all fashions is to follow the taste of the man. For example, I myself would wish the braids of a woman's hair to be somewhat short, as one is less embarrassed by them in the night. Those whose hair is long and abundant like a horse's tail must be guarded in their movement, so that the strands are not for ever catching in something.

Also a woman should not get into bed until she has washed and scented herself.

*If I'd a lovely mistress do not doubt it,  
I'd find a way to teach her all about it.*

To fall full-length on the bed in a heap is not very graceful ; you should skip in daintily like a light bird.

If the man is seized with a desire to seek you, give him a gracious welcome ; if he prefers to call you, you should go to him with an equally evident pleasure. In either case be gracious to your husband, jest and talk pleasantly with him ; behave as if you had been well brought-up. There should be no question of reserve at such a time, nor of waiting for the man to make the first advance.



*Ta'dīb ul-Nisvān*

*An ardent heart within a languorous frame  
Will make a perfect partner for the game.*

When you are at your husband's side, do not indulge in stupid whims or idle recriminations, above all avoid any allusion to what may have passed between you during the day. Rather excite his senses with playful and ardent remarks, cover him with kisses and invent him a thousand provocations.

*Now is the time for verbal liberty  
Without a reservation,  
Give all to love and scorn to be less free  
In act than conversation.*

Shamelessness is better in bed than prudery ; therefore do not imagine that your dignity will suffer if you surrender utterly to love. She who has so much self-esteem that she must affect reserve even at these moments should give up any thought of marriage and remain a spinster. It should be in love as with Lailah and Majnūn, and not as with Bībī khālah jān Kohpayah\*.

*I'll drain your sweetness with such wars,  
Your sugared breath shall be foredone,  
I'll think myself the planet Mars  
And you the moon he sets upon.*

*From the Persian*

But when dawn comes, you must say farewell to such love scenes, and forget them. Also you must keep absolute silence on all that has passed in the night. Do not imitate the fashion of too many women of our time, and show all your friends the marks of kisses you have had on the neck or breast, and tell them exactly what you have said or done in the darkness, and cry in pride : ‘ Just see how happy I am ! How enviable my lot is ! ’ May the Devil fly away with you and your lot ! The world’s lot would be better if you could control your tongue a little.

Unfortunately there are many women who evince neither tact nor education in this matter. Some are not content with merely talking, but must write to their friends in different parts of the town and bring them up to date in the matter of their husband’s prowess. Others spend all day at the bath, either with acquaintances or strangers, and there, while toying with egg-apples in sharp sauce, relate their night’s adventure to any who will listen.

It is better, in my opinion, not to have any lamp in the bedroom, and to forbid all waiting-maids and other talkers entrance to it. I also think that the woman may undress entirely at a certain moment, as the poet says :

*T a' d ī b ul - N i s v ā n*

*Between us now is but a single shift,*

*And if it gets into our way*

*I'll split and tear and rive and rend and rift*

*And leave you bright and bare and gay.*

The sports of love often give rise to fatigue which manifests itself in a great need for sleep. The woman should realise this and go back to her own bed, leaving her husband to repose in comfort. If he wakes later and calls her to talk to him, she must need no pressing; she must not answer: 'Leave me in peace! Am I a *sīghah*\* to amuse you when you are wearied and cannot sleep?' Numbers of women profit by these moments of their husband's weakness to give themselves airs, and say: 'I am *'akda*\*, and if you wish to remain my friend, you must begin by respecting me.' That is what they insolently say, and yet God knows they cannot usually afford such strictness. Men prefer the most ordinary *sīghah* to such great ladies, as being more simple and not playing the empress. The *sīghah* is ever content to yield to an amorous fantasy, even in a corridor or other less comfortable place; to say jestingly: 'It seems to me, dearest, that the place might have been better chosen,' is enough for her. This is why Hājji Jahāndār Mīrzā called the *sīghah* Madam Ever-ready.

### *From the Persian*

The coming together of husband and wife is, whatever anyone says to the contrary, the very foundation of marriage, and all I have written in this book bears directly or indirectly upon that important moment. It is, in fact, the eternal spring of every word and thought and action in the world, and of all our wars.

Take for example a wedding : see with what ceremony the bride is led to her husband's house ! The drums rattle with spirit, the music gives its liveliest air, and a great crowd follows the bright procession. Certain women have already gone forward to the house, and are hidden behind the door of the bridal chamber ; they wait the moment when love's champion shall take his possession, and if he is not quick about his conquest, they play him so many tricks, indulge in so many buffooneries, and let fly so many low jokes at his expense, that in the end his wedding garment is changed to one of mourning.

And if the husband is so ill-advised as to let several days go by without giving proof of his virility, it will do him no good later to treat his wife with the sincerest affection and greatest gallantry. All his efforts will be thrown away, and though he offer his life as a sacrifice, she will never forgive him. She will remain under the stress of that insult to her charm,

and will only ask coldly: 'Do you make fun of me?'

But once the marital act is accomplished, the man can break his wife's head if he likes; she will only take this brutal action as a joke and bear it uncomplainingly. All this is more the fault of nature than of woman.

Upon this act depends the reproduction of the human species, and it is a great blessing that God made sensual creatures of us; for if there were no such thing as carnal desire, how could a woman who has endured the terrible discomfort of a first pregnancy thereafter expose herself to the same unpleasantness; and how could a man when he has once known all the repulsive circumstances of birth continue to love a woman who has born? If we reflect on the matter coldly, we are forced to admit that there is nothing so uncleanly as the sexual approach, yet the pleasure is so great that we would suffer a thousand hardships to obtain it. In all this we recognise the wonder of the hand of God, labouring for the species; therefore man can but submit to his Destiny and continue his desire for women. Nay, God be praised that we are made so, for though the action inevitably weakens love, we should be very unhappy if we could not perform it.

Though it loses much in its Persian translation,

### *From the Persian*

the sense of a well-known Turkish proverb may well be given here: 'Deny your wife bread and water and clothing, but do not keep her short of love.'

But a husband's duty may, it is true, be fulfilled under two very different sets of conditions.

He may find himself both prisoner and slave to some ugly, crossgrained passionate woman, at whose terrible disposal (for I say nothing of blows with a stick!) he must be, by day and night, for the satisfaction of her ardour. And if, because he is not in the humour, he refuses her, he will have so many battle-scenes to witness that finally he may be compelled to consider a divorce.

Or his household may be founded upon deepest love, and in that case he will need no urging except from the needle of desire.

At such a moment it is not a good thing for the wife to be too much concerned about her comfort. Certain great ladies exact a multitude of preliminaries, especially if their husband claims this favour in the day-time. They have no idea of abandoning themselves except in some place devoted to the purpose, and, once there, they require the maid to come and spread the bed, to bring in towels, and to shut up all the doors before they will undress. After such long preparations the poor lover often feels his flame die down and fall asleep, and even when

the case is not so bad as this, there can be no great pleasure in love after such waiting. It is well then, I repeat, for the woman not to pay too much attention to these silly details. Let her rather be ever ready for her husband's amorous fantasy, and always have a yes for his advance, whether it be preceded by tender cajolery and exciting play or not.

And when the time comes, my dear, do not be sparing of eye-glances and pretty movements, but rather lavish all those coqueties which may excite desire. It is trouble lost to be modest, for the more provocative you prove yourself, the sweeter will love itself appear to you. And after you have surrendered yourself body and soul to your husband's kisses, in God's name get to your own bed and lie there quietly.

Directly you wake, and before your husband has risen, you should steal into another room and leave him in the hands of his servants, without concerning yourself for what he may do then. When you have given new brightness to your face by means of a careful toilet, you may unobjectionably return to him. I shall insist further upon this point in the next chapter.

*Sa'adi, it is not wise to say too much :*

*Have I done such ?*

*If so I cry in all humility :*

*God pardon me !*

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## 10. *Of Waking and Rising*

**I**N THE MORNING, AS SOON AS SHE HAS RISEN, the wife should say her prayer and recite the Koran, but without devoting too much time to this. Then she should speedily comb her hair and tint her eyelashes, should pass a fresh collyrium over her eyes, perfume her face and change her clothing, and should make, in fact, a complete and attentive toilet. After this she may enter her husband's presence with a cheerful laughing air, with the grace of a flaunting partridge or of the moon.

It seems to me, Madam, that you gain in every way by not letting your husband become acquainted with certain things : as dirty eyes surrounded with the black of old collyrium, and a face bedaubed with paint in dissolution, and yellow teeth, and a breath that poisons the air for many leagues, and crumpled, maculated clothing. How can you imagine for a moment that it is right chaotically to leave your room, to sit down beside your husband in a filthy and repulsive state, to yawn continually in his face, and to smoke kalyān\* after kalyān until his bright morning turns to darkest night ? Doubtless you can constrain him to endure these outrages without direct complaint, but, under his breath, he will implore God's pity ; mentally



he will vomit from the bottom of his soul at such a villainous face and fetid habits. His one idea will be to slink away and find some means of extrication from your claws.

Alas, even in our time, a multitude of women imagine that they have given their husbands as it were fresh life for the day by such exposures ; they conceive themselves well inspired never to leave the poor man for a moment ; they are in momentary expectation of being covered with kisses, and wonder why this does not happen.

You have the most astonishing ideas, my good woman, and I congratulate you. It will, I suppose, be a sort of breakfast for him to clean you, as dogs do in the street, while he embraces you. Will the poor dears never understand anything ? Can you not see that such conduct is tantamount to taking up a hatchet and cutting off your own feet ? Its last result is to irritate your husband, so that neither Mullā Ja'far nor Shaikh Mūsā\* could afterwards sweeten him.

Believe me, you will do much better to follow my advice : to get up first, that is, and make your toilet in another room, or, if your husband happens to have risen before you, to veil your face and creep away without attracting his attention.

### *From the Persian*

Some women exclaim : ‘ When people love, such little things are nothing. What does it matter ? ’ But to reason so is very dangerous ; for love did not seek us in our cradles, it germinated slowly and uneasily ; exterior female attractions were necessary to bring it to birth, and, if these attractions be neglected, disgust is of a quicker growth than love.

Get rid of all displeasing habits, and clean your teeth on rising. ‘ My teeth are purer than crystal, more brilliant than pearl,’ you say ; ‘ the perfume of my breath surpasses the rose.’ This may be so ; but unfortunately, however favoured you are by nature, it is quite possible for an indigestion or some other complaint to attack you in the night, and then, if your husband has a fancy to kiss you, your breath will be strong enough to destroy his love.

But I hear some other woman complain : ‘ It would have been much more just to tell of my neighbour’s breath, and yet that does not prevent her husband from kissing her night and day.’ Possibly so, but my purpose in writing these lines is not to enter into a discussion or dispute with you ; my motive is nobler : I want to teach you how to live.

There is a certain place where every husband, whether he likes it or not, must go from time to time, and remain in spite of the smell ; the

occupation which takes him there is neither very serious nor very poetic, but it is all-compelling. Now do not let it be said by those who come in contact with you that your breath gives rise to unpleasant comparisons ; rather let the man who adores you be tempted to inhale and embrace you like a flower, whenever you come near him. For the more he can so kiss you, the more he will wish to, and to begin again indefinitely.

Some women have been known to counter their husbands' objection in this matter of breath, by crying : ' I see you do not love me any more ! If only you loved me ! ' and by quoting these lines of the poet :

*A flower which ugly hands present,  
Though gay and breathing of the South,  
Is not so precious as the scent  
Of onions from a gracious mouth.*

That is a nice thing to say when the breath is corrupted by illness ! And I cannot help thinking that these dismal recriminations and trivial excuses are worse than the fault itself ; especially as the unfortunate husband is always forced to answer in the end : ' Yes, yes, you are right ! Of course you are right ! '

Wives of such a kind are much in need of education and correction, for God did not

### *From the Persian*

create them with stinking mouths and unpleasant faces ; they acquire such things for themselves and then blame Him. It is one of the accidents of our poor nature that the breath may be found vitiated, at waking, and the face changed ; washing and cleansing with tooth wood, dressing and adornment, can banish these defects, and it argues a lack of good sense to neglect such a simple precaution. Those who abstain from these indispensable attentions are of immeasurable stupidity, and are also doomed, alas ! to utter loneliness instead of love.

I should require many volumes to set forth all that a wife should do to maintain her position ; therefore it will be understood that this short pamphlet makes no claim to have exhausted its complex subject. I have had to restrain myself all the time, and to content myself with but an infinitesimal part of every question raised. Even so, I have said enough to draw down the abuse of every female reader ; but I am resigned, knowing that the Prophet of God said : '*Frankness is bitter.*'

It is not prudent to be quite candid even with intelligent people ; it is a real danger to be so with creatures having scarcely the half of a man's brain. Even now I can hear them exclaiming : ' Be off, you little dolt, if you have

## *Ta'dīb ul-Nisvān*

nothing better to do than stay and gabble !  
God grant you better inspiration, and, when  
you get it, address yourself elsewhere ! If you  
have any truth to tell, then tell it to your own  
wives rather than to us, or tell it about men !'  
But Allāh will, I trust, in the long run give  
these unfortunates a little sense of justice, and  
a little wit ; then they will read my work with  
attention and profit, and let it direct their  
conduct ; they will approve my words, and  
not find fault with them.

If this book were taught to little girls at school  
and in their infancy, if they were exhorted to  
follow its every precept, then would a calm and  
joyous life be assured, not only to them but to  
their houses.

*I have said all I had to say,  
Now mend your life or pass your way.*

This book has been finished  
with the help  
of God.

*The End.*

## NOTES

PAGE

- |     |                                       |  |
|-----|---------------------------------------|--|
| 81  | <i>A wide mantle</i>                  | signifying a man who has achieved position and who is, therefore, presumably of a ripe age.                                  |
| 85  | <i>Alexander</i>                      | Alexander the Great is said by the Persians to have introduced the first mirror into their country.                          |
| 85  | <i>Dīru</i>                           | maleficent spirit.   |
| 93  | <i>A bed of flowers</i>               | an allusion to Abraham's sacrifice. According to Moslem tradition the fire lighted for Isaac turned into a flowering garden. |
| 93  | <i>Gurunāg</i>                        | elephant driver.   |
| 94  | <i>Beard-dye</i>                      | an allusion to the custom of dyeing the beard red with henna.  |
| 100 | <i>His Majesty, the King of Kings</i> | Nasr ul-Din, the contemporary Shah of Persia.  |
| 101 | <i>Mā shā Allāh</i>                   | As Allāh wills! Arabic phrase implying admiration.   |
| 105 | <i>Steam-boat</i>                     | still a marvel of rarity at the time.  |
| 108 | <i>Chādar</i>                         | large mantle of light stuff.   |

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PAGE

109	<i>Gursī</i>	a brazier.
113	<i>Farrāsh</i>	a superior servant, literally one who spreads the carpet.
113	<i>Ayat ul-kursī</i>	a verse of the Koran recited by Moslems when in danger or fear of misfortune.
116	<i>Batmān</i>	about three kilograms.
117	<i>‘Itr-i-fitnah</i>	“troubling essence” of narcissus.
138	<i>Bībī khālah jūn Koh- pāyah</i>	a proverbially ugly woman.
140	<i>Sīghah</i>	temporary wife by contract.
140	<i>‘Akda</i>	legitimate wife.
145	<i>Kalyān</i>	water-pipe.
146	<i>Multā ja‘far and Shaikh Mūsa</i>	sorcerers of ancient legend.







